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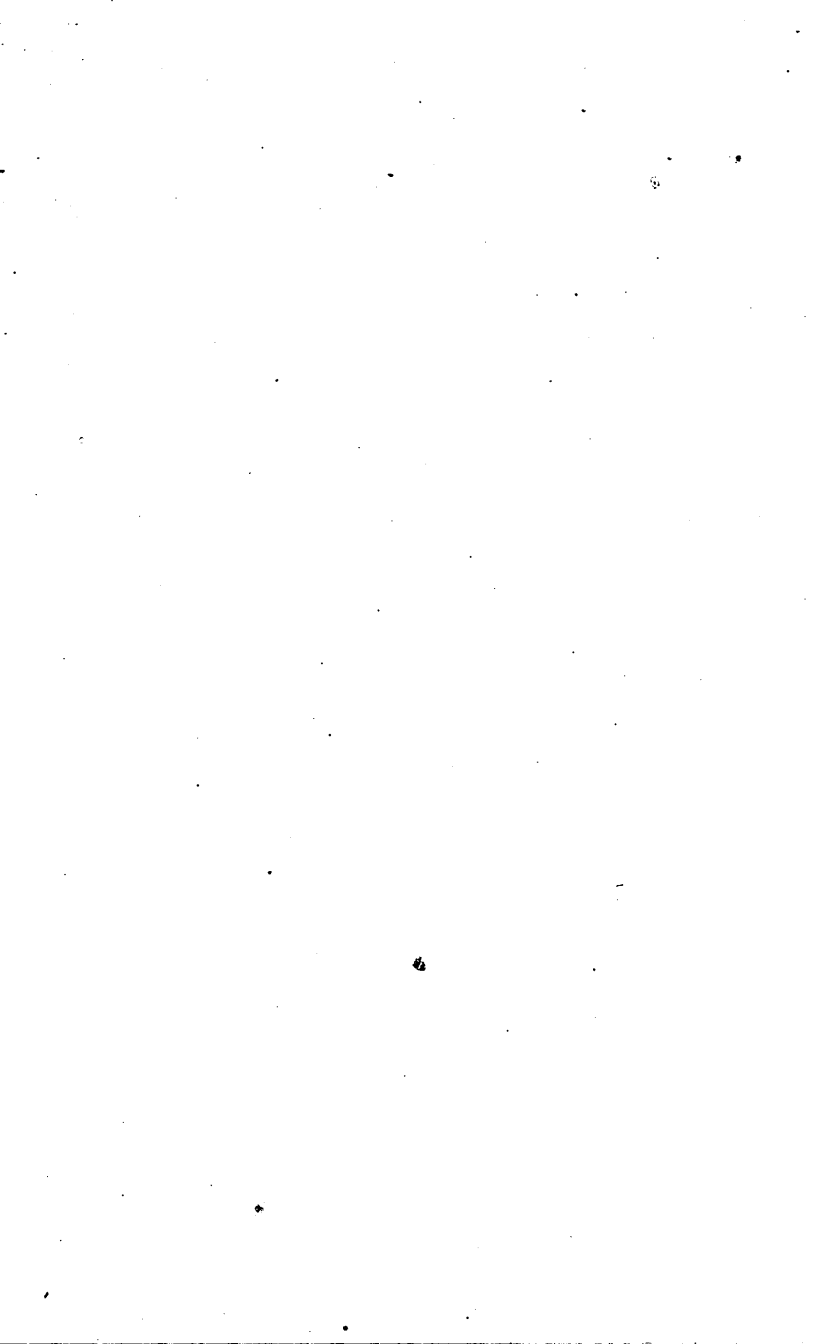
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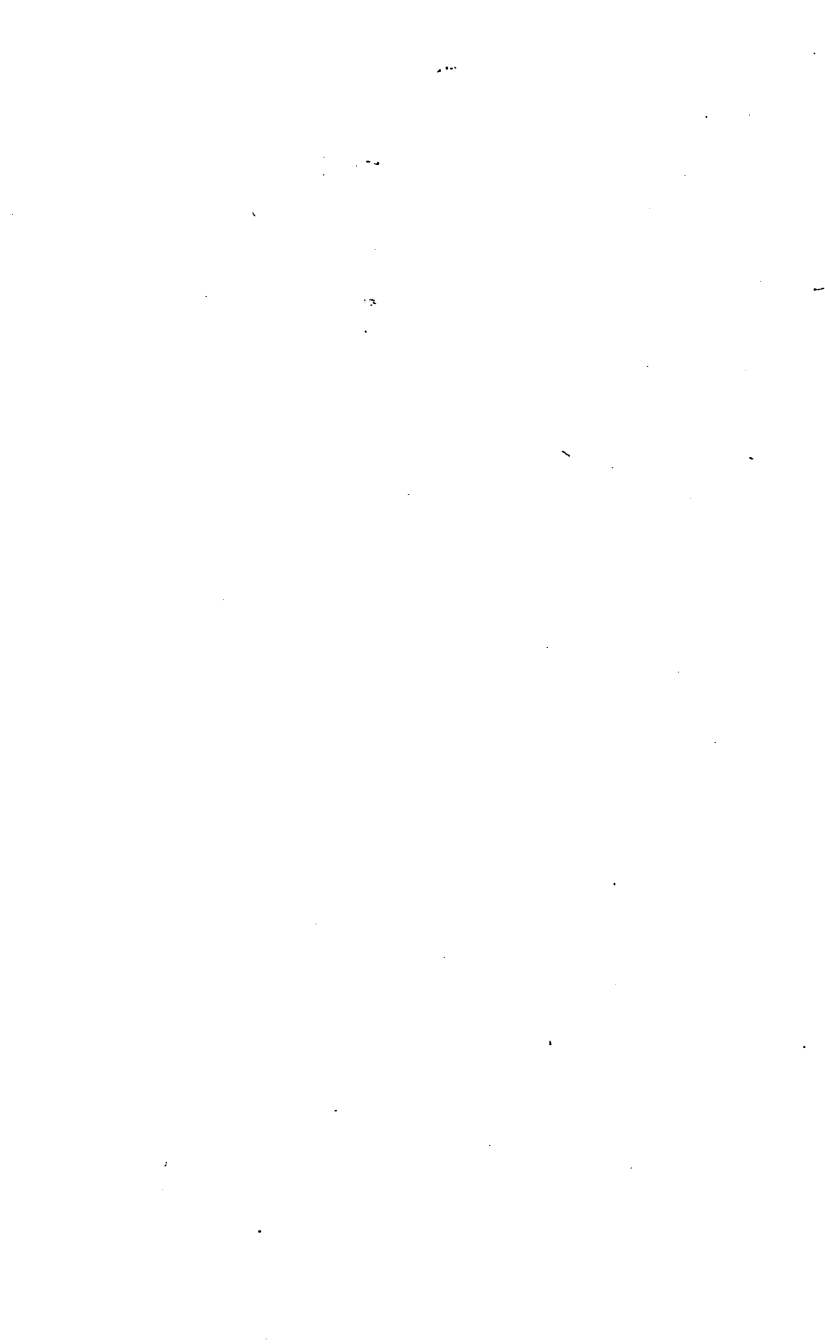
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Engall, Mrs. Thulia Susannah (Henderson)
11

THE GOOD TEACHER;

A MANUAL

FOR

SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS.

A Prize Essay.

By T. S. HENDERSON.

Philadelphia:

AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,

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ADVERTISEMENT

OF THE

COMMITTEE OF THE LONDON SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION.

The following is a Copy, in part, of the Advertisement of the Committee of the Sunday-school Union, which led to the preparation of this Manual, to which the first Prize of One Hundred and Twenty-five dollars was awarded.

PRIZE MANUAL FOR SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS.

THE Committee of the Sunday-school Union have decided to offer a Premium of ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS for the best MANUAL suitable to be placed in the hands of a Sunday-school Teacher on appointment to a Class. The proposed work is especially intended for the use of those who teach in SCRIPTURE Classes.

The work should not exceed 150 pages, foolscap, 8vo. Its style should be clear and pointed, and its illustrations brief and appropriate.

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PART I.

THE TEACHER'S PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

THE Master, whom we serve, has not left us without sufficient call to our work, nor without general instructions as to the mode of its performance. The same voice which said, "Feed my sheep," said, also, "Feed my lambs." The office of Christian ministers and that of Sunday-school teachers must be considered as running parallel. They describe orbits which may differ widely in magnitude, but they move around the same centre. "Christ, and him crucified," is the theme which each adopts; the salvation of souls, the result which each desires to attain; the glory of God, the end at which each strives to aim. Each has a charge committed to him, a care of souls, a trust for which he must render account. Each is seeking to lead sinners to the Saviour, to guide wandering feet into the path of peace, and to further the work of him whose prerogative it is to bring many sons to glory. Both have peculiar difficulties to contend with, and both have

special promises on which to rely. Their strivings, and fearings, and hopings, though circumstantially different, are essentially the same. The rules of their sowing and their reaping are as so many radii of two concentric circles in a plane, which diverge in given directions from the same point, and coincide to a given distance.

It follows, therefore, that one who has undertaken a Sunday class will find no portion of Holy Writ more replete with appropriate teachings than the three ministerial epistles. The two letters to Timothy, and that addressed to Titus, should be read and re-read, pondered and laid to heart, obeyed and acted on, as well by the teacher as the pastor. They tell what such an one should be, how he should behave, what he should do, and what avoid, whereunto he should aspire, and whereby he may best reach the mark. They define his individual character, lay down his official requisites, furnish the outline of his varied duties, and point to his final responsibility.

It may be assumed, as a primary position, that he who desires the office of a Sunday-school teacher, "desireth a good work." If it be good to turn sinners from the error of their ways, then surely it is good to deter the young from treading the downward road, while their feet have as yet scarcely tried the slippery descent. If it be good to bring the hoary head to bow to the requirements

of Christ, then surely it is no less good to accustom the neck of childhood to the gospel's easy yoke. To insist on this, or seek to demonstrate it, would be a waste of words.

Proceed a step further, and it will be seen that there is a necessity for our being "prepared unto" this, as unto "every good work." On an enterprise so important, no one should rush heedlessly; on a mission so sacred, none should run without being sent. It is no trivial preparation that will make us "vessels unto honor," and meet for the use of such a Master. Worthy to be employed by him, we can never be; but we assuredly might and should make it our study to be less unworthy than we commonly are.

The fitness, which is required, may be viewed as resolving itself into two grand divisions—personal and official; the former, pertaining to us especially as Sunday-school teachers; the latter, incumbent on us in common with all who undertake the tuition of the young in any of its varied branches; the former, demanded by the sphere of our labor; and the latter, by the nature of our work.

Our sphere is the Sabbath-school. Our duty there is a religious one. What religious dispositions and feelings, then, are obligatory in order to its right discharge? Mainly these:—piety of heart, purity of motive, soundness of doctrine,

consistency of conduct, and prayerfulness of soul. To treat of them separately will indeed be to travel on beaten ground, but it is ground which must be traversed, and which none rightly-minded would desire to avoid. Familiarity with the path may enable and justify a more rapid transit than would otherwise have been desirable or safe.



CHAPTER I.

PIETY OF HEART.

NONE can be a teacher who has never been a learner. If a man professes to instruct, it is necessarily supposed that he has, in some way or other, received instruction of some sort, either oral or written, either from parent or friend, master or book. In like manner, if a man professes to give religious instruction, it is to be inferred that he has himself been, more or less, within the reach of religious influences. Either from God's Spirit, or from God's people, or from God's word, or from all combined, he has come, or thinks he has come, to know something about God's will. If he is neither a deceiver, nor a self-deceiver, then he is one who, to a greater or less extent, *has* acquired such knowledge, is conscious of its value, and desires to impart it. If this knowledge is of the right kind, it matters comparatively little how many or how few the privileges which have subserved to its attainment. The question is not whether such an one has had a Lois or a Eunice to train his infant mind, but whether in him there really dwells a

true and living "FAITH." Without this faith, he who from a child has known the Scriptures, is incompetent to unfold their meaning aright; possessed of such faith, he who is but little acquainted with the letter of the sacred volume, may be an apt interpreter of its spiritual teachings. Piety, though often to be traced in a happy succession from generation to generation, is no heir-loom; and pious parentage, though a boon unspeakable, confers not that better gift of grace which none but God himself can bestow. It is not every one who can boast a godly ancestry, it is not every one who has been a scholar in our schools, that is fit to take a teacher's post. To have sat at the feet even of an apostle will not fit us to do an apostle's work, while we remain strangers to an apostle's spirit. Knowledge, the best, the loftiest, and the most extensive, can never take the place of faith.

But further: the religious teacher must have this faith "IN" him. No merely external assent to the truth will suffice; there must have been an internal reception of it. To have looked upon the plan of salvation from without is not enough; there must have been the apprehending of it from within by the outstretched tendrils of the heart's gratitude and love. A mere national faith—if such a thing there is or can be—will not avail; there must be a vital principle at

work. This is evident from a variety of considerations.

It is only an unfeigned faith that *works by love*, and a love for his theme ought to characterize the teacher in a Sunday-school. He who feels no personal interest in the lesson, will not be likely to interest others in it. He who has in his own soul no love to Jesus, can hardly expect to be successful in commending the Saviour to those around. That secular instructor who takes a cordial delight in the theme or themes of his tuition, who throws his whole soul into the task, and labors with an energy as spontaneous as it is cheerful, is the one who most enjoys his work, and who labors with most profit to his pupils. Let a Sabbath class be placed under the care of one to whom the name of Christ is precious, to whom the doctrines of the gospel are as sweet music, to whom the sacred volume is a mine of wealth, and his beaming eye, his radiant countenance, his heart-toned accents, will bespeak the gladness which he feels, and will do much to excite his scholars' attention to the truths their "teacher loves so well." Let an unconverted man take such a class, and none can deny the possibility of his going through the routine creditably, nay, even ably, so far as externals go ; yet certain it is, that he will ere

long find his duty a weariness, and his success at best a partial one.

An unfeigned faith, moreover, will alone *inspire that earnestness* which our work requires. We are called to deal with the things which make for the everlasting welfare of souls. Shall we dare to speak of these with sluggish accents and in a sleepy tone? Better, far better, never speak of them at all. So to speak of them is to defeat one's own argument—so to speak of them is to do more harm than good. Those who teach for eternity should of all men be those to teach with fervor and with fire. This the unconverted cannot be expected to do. What a man has never felt, he cannot well speak of with pathos or with force, unless he be acting the stage-player's part. The words of one who speaks from mere hearsay, are lifeless, pointless, powerless. But listen to the man who can say, "I believed, and therefore have I spoken." He it is whose speech is apt to sink into the heart, and whose utterances are likeliest to leave their impress on the memory. They who have the love of God most shed abroad in their souls, will the most glowingly dwell on its heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths. They who most realizingly believe in the truth of hell's endurances and of heaven's joys, will, under God's blessing, the most effectively induce souls to

flee from the wrath to come, and to strive after heavenly bliss. The mouth speaks best when it speaks "out of the abundance of the heart."

An unfeigned faith is called for, further, from *the peculiar nature of the gospel itself*. It is spiritual teaching that we have to impart. The "deep things of God" we are called on to unfold. And by whom are these wondrous truths apprehended? Not by the unregenerate. "He that is of God," and he only, "heareth God's words:" for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Partaker of a fallen nature, and dealing with fallen beings like himself, how shall the unconverted man unfold to the blind eye those glorious verities whose beauties still lie hid from his own gaze? or how communicate to the deaf ear an echo of those celestial harmonies he himself has never heard? The outside of Christian truth, and nothing more, has met his view; the theory of the Christian scheme, and nothing better, has riveted his attention. But the external and the speculative, though incidental to the truth, are not its main aspects. God's truth is a message of salvation, and a word of life. It has a glorious internal reality, and, where it is rightly received, a vital practical power. If we had no better

object before us than to train up the young as formalists or theologians, with pious words on their lips, and holy doctrines in their creed, then we might attempt the work with no better qualifications than that sort of Christianity, or rather of religionism, which has been well defined as merely "a sacred accomplishment of the intellect." But so long as we are bound to aim at something higher than this, so long as we are under obligation to seek for our youthful charge that holiness of principle in heart and life, without which none can glorify God here, or enjoy him hereafter, so long we shall see cause to utter the Psalmist's prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." (Ps. li. 10-13.)

But again : it is not enough that there be in us an unfeigned faith ; this faith must be deep-rooted. It must rise to a lofty growth, it must be crowned with unfading verdure. It is not a past, but a present, ever-living, ever-abiding faith that we need. It must be a faith that "is" in us, day by day, hour by hour. Though we may have been renewed by God's grace, we are still in a world of perils ; and often the things that are in use are "ready to die." The working Christian may

be comparatively exempt from those special dangers to which the church's loiterer is more imminently exposed ; and yet he may incur risks that are peculiarly his own. If lack of exercise is injurious to the physical constitution, so also is over-exertion : and, in like manner, while one Christian is weakened by selfish sloth, another is injured by his excessive zeal. It has often been remarked, that if we study the pages of church history, we shall find the diffusion of spiritual light to have been always best promoted by those who have most sedulously cared to keep their own lamps well-trimmed and brightly burning. Whatever work is performed for the good of others, will only be prosecuted successfully when it is not suffered to effect the deterioration of personal piety, by leading to a neglect of those devotional exercises of the closet and the heart which feed the flame of practical godliness.

A useful lesson may be learned from the singular properties of the "mowana-tree," which, as Dr. Livingstone tells us, possesses a vitality that can resist both external and internal injury. Now it seems to us that the bustling professor of religion may fitly be compared to the "exogenous" tree—outside all is verdure, while perhaps inside all is hollow and dead. The sluggish soul may be likened to the "endogenous" tree, which, after having braved many an adverse

storm, and survived many a rude shock, withers away for want of power to develop an outward growth.* But in neither of these classes is the truly thriving believer to be ranked. Where religion is prospering in the soul, the progress of the inner life will keep pace with the growing vigor of the outer life. Let the laborer in God's vineyard lay this to heart; for if he neglects his own soul, the activities in which he spends his strength will tend to his individual injury.

Not for his own sake merely should the Sunday-school teacher cultivate a high order of piety, but also on account of the influence he exerts upon his class, many of whom will fall below the measure of his attainments, while few will rise beyond it. Let him lower his standard, and in so doing he lowers theirs. That zeal which leads a man to undertake more than comports with self-fidelity, is in fact its own enemy, and destroys where it would fain build up. Feeble piety is an inefficient thing. Scanty is the influence it wins, and slight the impression it makes, because cheerless are the attractions it holds out. Especially is it so as it regards the young. Their nature, instinct with ardor, buoyancy, and joy, has no chord that will respond to the sepulchral tones or the pining melancholy of a distempered soul.

* Livingstone's Travels in South Africa.

Important, all-important as is our present theme, it is but the initial, and must lead us on to what lies beyond. It would be out of place to enter on any discussion as to whether the unconverted should be employed in our schools, or utterly rejected, or admitted only as assistants to carry out the more mechanical part of the class-duties. It is to the teacher, as already admitted, that a word must be faithfully addressed. If a Christian in heart as well as in name, he must be urged to more rapid advances in the divine life. He must be stirred up to emulate the devotedness of Paul, the ardor of Peter, the spirituality of John; nay, he must be roused to adopt a higher than human model, copying the example of his Lord and Master, and laboring such to be and so to do, that in all things and at all times he may be able to say, as did the apostle, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

Are any conscious that they are strangers to the hopes and privileges of the gospel? Let them heed the earnest and affectionately-pleading remonstrance, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" Think how aggravated your guilt, how fearful your doom, if you continue to reject for yourselves the inspired message you have undertaken to teach. You do not deem that message false, or you would hardly be found

among its professed heralds. But if the holy Book of God is true, is it not true for you as well as for others? Are not its commands binding, its threats resting on yourself? Are not its joyous news declared, and its glorious promises held out to you? Oh, that you would give no rest to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, till you have obeyed the great New Testament command, and renouncing all other hope, have fled for refuge to him who on Calvary opened, to you the way of life. Then will a new song be put into your mouth, a new impulse given to your teachings, and you will, as many before you have done, change the injunction, "Go to Jesus," into the glad invitation, "Come, see; . . . is not this the Christ?"



CHAPTER II.

PURITY OF MOTIVE.

ONE way in which the assailants of a creed or of a cause endeavor to impugn it, is the allegation that its professors or prompters are actuated by unworthy motives. "Doth Job fear God for nought?" was the arch-fiend's inquiry concerning the patriarch of Uz. "I seek not yours but you," was the self-vindication the apostle was "compelled" to make in reply to those who judged him as if he "walked according to the flesh." The gratuitous nature of the agency which alone is now employed in our Sunday-schools, disarms the calumniator of power to bring against us the charge of a mercenary spirit. But let us not imagine that he may not in other respects, and too truthfully, find occasion against us. Though pecuniary gain does not accrue, is there no danger of our being swayed by other incitements that are equally unsuitable? Are there with us no Pharisees, who love to "have praise of men?" no envious ones, who teach Christ of "strife" and "contention?" Is there no Diotrophes, loving to "have the pre-eminence?" no

“Saul among the prophets,” worked upon by the influence of example and the spirit-stirring power of a sympathetic attraction? Are there no Miriams among our prophetesses, self-glorious and vain—“tattlers and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not?” no Jezebels, that dare not meet the searching glance of him whose “eyes are like unto a flame of fire?”

Our hearts should be examined, and that with an earnest self-questioning. Even in the best among us, there will be much admixture of inferior, and it may be, if we take not heed, of sinful motive. “Uncorruptness,” “gravity,” “sincerity,” must be our mottos. Singleness of heart, steadiness of aim, honesty of purpose, we cannot too watchfully maintain. We should remember the reproof our Lord gave to those who sounded a trumpet before them. We should remember the pattern set us in the life of him who did not “cry, nor lift up nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.” Our work should be done “as of God, in the sight of God,” not lightly entered on, not lightly discharged, not lightly forgotten. It should be felt as a serious responsibility, fulfilled as a sacred trust, followed up by close self-examination. We must beware of the “dead fly” which would pollute “the ointment.” We must get rid of the alloy which detracts from the genuineness of the metal. We

must betake ourselves to him who, as "the Refiner and Purifier," is appointed to make his people's offering "pleasant and acceptable to the Lord." We must submit ourselves to his testing scrutiny, and welcome at his hand even a fiery discipline, if so we may come forth as "silver tried in the furnace," and as "gold seven times purged."

No doubt there are some inferior considerations which may be allowed a moderate influence, being not evil in themselves, nor evil at all, but helpful so long as they are kept in due subordination. The danger is, lest we unconsciously permit them to gain an ascendancy. The stimulus of friendly co-operation between teacher and teacher, the kindly approval which for our work's sake we gain from those that name the name of Christ, the esteem and affection in which we are held by the children of our charge, the watering our own souls, experiences in the watering of others, and the reward we reap in seeing the gradual progress of those whom we instruct—each and all of these may be admitted as subsidiary, but they must never become prime motives. None of them may be suffered to usurp the place of an impelling power. They may serve as side-winds, which from time to time may help to swell a rightly adjusted sail, but which, if we scud before them, will drive us far out of our

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course, perhaps amid wrecking shoals and dangerous reefs.

Is it asked, What motive or motives ought to actuate us? We answer:

1. The glory of God. It was because Christ could say, "I have glorified thee on earth," that he could add, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." So is it to be with his followers. They are to let their "light shine before men," but it is in order that men may "glorify" their Father in heaven. They are to bear "much fruit," for "herein is the Father glorified." They are to be "strong in faith," thus "giving glory to God." Whether they eat, or drink, or whatsoever they do, they are to "do all to the glory of God." And if in daily life we are to blend a desire for God's honor with the pursuit of our worldly concerns, then how much more does it become us, when hastening "to the help of the Lord against the mighty," to put away all self-seeking, vain-glory, and coveting of notoriety. We have the express injunction, "If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." What we do in the Sunday-school should be done unto the Lord, and not unto men; for God, and not for self. "Did ye it unto me, even to me?" is

the question by which our every work will be judged.

2. We shall find a powerful motive in the Saviour's love. "The love of Christ constraineth us," said the apostle, when accounting for the earnestness of his ministrations. Take his expression in either of the senses assigned to it. The love of Christ to us should have an impulsive force. What shall we not do for Him who has done for us so much? what labor shall we deem too arduous, or what sacrifice too costly, when demanded in his service, who for us toiled, and for us gave his precious life? The answering love also which we have for him, faint and feeble as it is, can be no inoperative principle. "Lovest thou me?" is the inquiry, on the affirmative answer to which hangs the commission to our work. "Whatsoever ye do in word, or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," is the apostolic rule as well for Christian enterprise as for Christian life.

3. The good of souls may be ranked among the allowable inducements to our work. Mere philanthropy will not suffice. Ours must be philanthropy of the right kind,—that which looks on human beings as they really are, recognizes their compound nature, and realizes how immeasurably the spiritual and undying interests transcend those which are but temporal and

transitory. "Know'st thou the value of a soul immortal?" might not unsuitably be inscribed above the portal of our schools, or on the covering of our class-books; but far more effective still would the question be, if deeply graven on the tablets of the memory and of the soul.



CHAPTER III.

SOUNDNESS OF DOCTRINE.

The case of the judaizing teachers in the church at Ephesus was one that has found its parallel in every age. Human nature is always prone to affix to the sacred oracles that interpretation which best accords with the prevalent tastes and tenets of each successive epoch. If strict disciplinarianism or formal ceremonialism be the order of the day, then we find a pertinacious adherence to creeds however faulty in expression, and to rituals however cumbrous in observance. If laxity and spurious liberalism be among the signs of the times, we behold the sudden demolition of old landmarks as useful as they are age-honored, and of sacred institutions the most worthy of our reverence. True wisdom lies in preserving "the golden medium," thus keeping the mean between distances that are equally perilous. It will not do to be so loosely rooted as to endanger our being carried away by every wind of divers and strange doctrines; nor is it well to be buried in so deep a seclusion that no healthful agitation of the air shall ever be suffered

to try the firmness of our branches. It is right for us to stand and ask for "the old paths," and commonly we shall find them to be indeed "the good way," wherein we may walk and find rest to our souls; but it is no less proper for us to welcome every new light which shines upon the road. The teachings of "science falsely so called" we are bound to reject; those of true science we are no less bound to accept, and to hold the more firmly or the more loosely according to the amount and weight of evidence that can be adduced in their favor.

From the religious teacher, this is even more imperatively demanded than from the private Christian. The teacher, if he is like a reed shaken by the wind, may unsettle many by the vacillation of his judgment. If he harbors dubiety of mind, he becomes a perpetuator and a promulgator of doubt. If he knows not what to think as to the eternal duration of punishment, as to the fulness and freeness of the gospel-invitation, as to the moral ability or inability of man, as to the universality or limitation of Christ's redemptive work, as to the bearing which the mystery of election has or has not on man's duty or man's destiny, as to the teachings which the Old Testament has for us that live under the New economy, as to the ordinances which pertain to the Christian dispen-

sation, as to the bindingness of the sacred day of rest, and so forth, we see not, while he continues thus to waver, how he can advance in his career of Sunday-tuition without coming to many a painful halt, or taking many an irresolute step. He is not bound to subscribe in these things to the views of other men, as men ; nor, if he thinks as others do, is he of necessity to declare the truth in the precise terms, or enforce it by the identical line of argument, which others would employ. What he has to do is to search God's word, to inquire concerning God's will, and to make known what stands revealed as God's truth.

All allowance is to be made for the honest-hearted man who has to struggle with numberless difficulties, and grapple with manifold delusions ; but so long as he remains in a state of hesitancy, either concerning the authenticity of the revelation itself, or the nature of the foundation-truths therein revealed, it is difficult to see what right he has to take a position in which he must perforce act a hypocrite's part, by teaching what runs counter to his belief, or else do a tempter's work by implanting the poisonous germ, whence may shoot forth the desolating Upas-tree of a confirmed scepticism. There was a Thomas among the twelve, a doubter graciously forgiven and tenderly dealt with, yet we read not in inspired record of any high

commission he received, or any high achievements he performed. An objector may point to the case of Dr. Arnold as a supposed instance to the contrary; but if fairly examined, it serves rather to confirm than confute the argument. Heavy were the mists of doubt that for a season veiled from that lofty intellect the unclouded shining of gospel-grace; but such was not the period of his eminent and memorable usefulness. His Rugby Sermons evince the thorough-going whole-heartedness, the moral tone of manly decision, the full calm vigor of one whose feet were firm upon a rock; and his Rugby pupils have many of them testified that it was his manifestly "vivid realization" of the revealed truths of Christianity, which made him "the true sort of captain for a boys' army, one who had no misgivings, and gave no uncertain word of command." He was a man of considerate and candid charity, for he never forgot that he had passed beneath the shadow of the cloud. He was a man of constancy and consistency and cheerfulness, for the darkness and perplexity of night had fled and given place to the clear light of day. His history, therefore, forms no exception to the rule that they who most efficiently "hold forth the word of life," are they who most strenuously "hold fast that which is good."

While avoiding doubt, however, teachers must

not become guilty of dogmatism. While they teach nothing but the truth, they must teach that truth in love. While they grasp it firmly, they must be prepared to look at it in every light. While they never dilute it to make it more in accordance with the likings of fallen humanity, they must never add to it any ingredient of bitterness derived solely from the pharmacopœia put forth by theological schools. They must take for their guide Scripture, as it is; not Scripture, as this or that sect may have systematized it. They must teach it as, did the apostles, plainly, fully, fearlessly. While they shrink not from declaring the whole counsel of God, they must be on their guard against any attempt to add thereto. They must conceal nothing that the Bible reveals; they must refrain from diving into what the Bible purposely conceals. They should awaken in their pupils a thirst for truth, and then point them to the source of truth. To see them become real Christians should be more anxiously desired than to have them prove tenacious controversialists. Had we more zeal for souls, there would be a greater love of truth. We are at liberty to wish, nay, it is natural and proper for us to long, that others should think as we do. It is very desirable, that from time to time we should give the reasons for our distinctive views. Children

should receive both a Christian and a denominational training. The perfection of religious teaching, if we could secure it, would be the attainment of a capacity so to hold forth the doctrines of the gospel as not to resign one iota of what we deem inspired verity, and yet so as not to lose sight of the vast substratum of truth on which are based what we think the mistaken tenets of those from whom we are constrained to differ.

It may be well here to make mention of the importance which attaches not only to sound doctrine, but no less to a sound advocacy of it. The Sunday-school teacher should be a clear logician, as well as a candid theologian. It is not enough that he should teach the truth, nor even that he should teach it in love ; it must also be done "in all wisdom." Much damage is done to the cause of Christianity, and much handle given to the objections of the infidel, by the use of weak and inconclusive arguments. False "antitheses" are to be condemned as among the rhetorical arts, which can "make the worse appear the better" cause ; and such sophistic artifices are as needless as they are unbecoming in the abettors of truth. A habit of resorting to lame or inappropriate modes of reasoning, in support either of the evidences or the doctrines of Christianity, argues a secret

distrust, whereby we do dishonor alike to the gospel and to its divine Author. The same line of remark will apply in reference to scripture proofs. Mr. Barnes, in his *Essays on Science and Theology*, has more than once dwelt on the evil of "proof-texts that prove nothing," or that are "applicable to any thing else rather than the point for which they are adduced." An example or two of what we mean may be found useful :—

1. John v. 7, should not be cited in proof of a unity in the Trinity, because the context shows that the reference is to unity in *testimony*, and not to unity in *essence*.

Dan. vii. 9, 10, must not be advanced as a proof-text on the subject of the final judgment, because, however appropriately its wording may describe that event, the vision was not designed to be predictive of the great day of account, but of something anterior to the winding up of earth's concerns.

As it respects both himself and his scholars, the teacher must be on his guard, neither advancing nor accepting a bad proof. To this end, he must cultivate a thorough acquaintance, not only with the words of scripture, but the scope of the passages with which they stand connected. He must not wrest a verse from its true acceptance, or put upon it a significance it was never designed to have.

A word or two here, on another matter, closely allied with the foregoing, and which is worth the attention of those teachers, who, living in cities and in large country-towns, can command advantages that are not within the reach of such as reside in rural districts. In order to a thorough insight into the meaning of scripture, it is no small help to be able to examine it in the languages in which it was originally written. The formation of Hebrew and Greek classes, in connection with our Sunday-school institutes, has been ridiculed by not a few, but somewhat unjustly. The amount of time which most teachers have for the pursuit of study is too small to allow of their making any very considerable proficiency ; and were they, with a scanty modicum of knowledge, to set themselves up as biblical expositors, prepared to set at rest with their *ipse dixit* those vexed questions on criticism on which the profoundest oriental or classical scholars are at issue, it would be simply absurd. If, however, they content themselves with making a modest use of their moderate attainments, then they may be highly advantaged by just so much acquaintance with the original languages of Holy Writ as may enable them to search out for themselves the meaning of a word or of a clause. They will still require the aid furnished by the commentator, and will value it the more from their enhanced

power of appreciating the point and pith of his annotations. Many a time, too, they may be conscious of a difficulty which the commentary fails to solve, but which disappears of itself as soon as they look out the actual words of the inspired text. Take an illustration :—

Our friend, Mr. Merton, had carefully studied his subject for the afternoon's class, and with the theme fully wrought into his mind, he went to the morning service, watchful, according to his wont, for any thing said, or sung, or read, whereby he might enrich his lesson, and at the same time foster in the minds of the class an impression that they, as well as their teacher, could take a share, and find a portion, in the sanctuary-exercise. The sermon was one they were likely to understand and to remember. The emblem-text, "And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds," was happily and skillfully treated. The divisions were clear and succinct; the figurative allusions were just such as boys would comprehend and relish; the picture of a sea-squall was given to the very life; and it was unquestionable that a reference to this discourse in the afternoon would excite an unusual interest. But was there any link of connection by which it might be suitably interwoven with the matter they would have in hand? Mr. Merton's mind grasped one point of easy transition. In the

chapter occurred the words, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." There seemed a parallel between this and the emphatic "*Now* men see not the bright light." True, the preacher had not emphasized the word; but was this because it could not justifiably be made to bear the stress? Mr. Merton hesitated. He had once heard of a pulpit exhortation founded on the words, "Come now, and let us reason together," &c. ; and had been told that the force laid on the second word of that text, as reprobating the danger of delay, however religiously truthful, was philologically false. He dreaded lest he should fall into a like mistake. He turned to his "Expositor," but it threw no light upon the point. He took down his Hebrew Bible, compared the verse in Isaiah with that in Job, and saw at once that the expressions were not identical. He went earlier than usual to the school, that he might consult the Lexicon which the Teachers' Library possessed. He searched for the two differing words, and found that while the term employed by the prophet was necessarily a particle of entreaty, that used by Elihu was, though not invariably, yet most frequently, an adverb of time. The context seemed to warrant its being thus taken, and our friend had the satisfaction of feeling that he might safely use the morning's text and morn-

ing's sermon in confirmation of the afternoon's teaching.

To the instructor who has similar advantages within his reach, we say, Go and do likewise. To those who have no educational resources at their command, we say, Go and do the best you can : a man is accepted according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not. Only see to it that you be found "mighty in the Scriptures," and that you never knowingly pervert its sentences by misapplying them in support of doctrines however true. "If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully ;" nor can we hope to be successful teachers of God's word, while venturing to tamper with a message which is of origin divine. No truth is honorably vindicated by a lie, or aught approximating to a lie ; still less, therefore, does the cause of God require promotion by means as ignoble as they are injudicious.

CHAPTER IV.

CONSISTENCY OF CONDUCT.

“If it were necessary,” says a titled novelist, “that practice square with precept, our monitors would be but few.” Thus Shakspeare, “It is a good divine that follows his own instructions ; I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching.” There is much in these assertions that is unquestionably true ; and if none might fill the office of Sunday-school teacher but such as perfectly live up to the rules they labor to enforce, our ranks would be thinned to very emptiness. But the above statements must not be abused. While they may serve to keep us from deserting our post, they should stimulate us to meet the claims involved in our adherence to it. Practice and precept *ought* to be in harmony ; and we must seek to make them so, not by restraining our voice from the utterance of the latter, but by redoubling our attention to the former. While it would be indecorous in a teacher either to feel or to say, “Stand by, for I am holier than thou,” it is his bounden duty to

address to himself the caution, Let me beware, for my position, my office, my responsibility, demand that mine should be no ordinary sanctity.

It is needful here to make an important distinction. It has been well observed by the author of "Philip Van Artavelde," in one of his prose works, that a man may justifiably "censure in others a fault with which he himself is chargeable;" that the limitation which would forbid this "is founded on the erroneous notion of moral censure being an honorable privilege instead of a responsible function—a franchise instead of a due;" and that as "no faults are better known and understood by us than those whereof we have ourselves been guilty," so "none surely should be so personally obnoxious to us as those by which we have ourselves been defiled and degraded." We may not call it inconsistency when the cry of warning is uplifted to indicate a pitfall into which the speaker has well nigh fallen, or a hidden snare in the like of which his feet have been taken unawares. His own experience of the evil, his shuddering remembrance of the peril, his grateful sense of rescuing mercy, may give a heightened vividness to his representations of the misery and danger that attend what may once have been his besetting sin, and is still his sorest temptation. The

case where inconsistency is chargeable is that of the man who would urge duties which he perseveres in neglecting, and who would forbid to others what he connives at in himself.

It is not enough that, instead of taking our station on the shore, and bidding our class win their way alone against the stream, we should ourselves launch forth and seek to stem the tide. It is needful, in addition to this, that we guard against "looking one way, while we pull another," like the boatmen of our own land. Like the Venetian gondolier, we should direct our gaze as well as steer our course toward the desired mooring-place. The backward look of Lot's wife toward Sodom will not befit those who are urging others to hasten away from the city of destruction. The apostle, who to his son in the faith could give the advice, "Exercise thyself unto godliness," was able to testify, in reference to his own course of life, "Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men."

In a Christian teacher there must be no shade of immorality or vice. One might almost be disposed to think the remark superfluous. Alas, that there should be a sad necessity for dwelling on the theme. Yet such there is. If the apostle saw need to caution the young ministers whom he addressed, and to remind them that one

invested with sacred office must not be found "given to wine" or "given to filthy lucre," addicted to bad company, or swayed by angry passions, there is equal need to enforce on all the instructors of youth the claims of sobriety, justice, temperance, good companionship, and holiness, together with all that is lovely and of good report. And if needful at any time, peculiarly so in the present day, when commercial dishonesty stalks abroad in our land, and steals into the heart and life of not a few who have been flaming professors of religious principle, and active members of religious institutions.

There is a solemn importance attaching to a teacher's consistency or inconsistency, which fully warrants its prolonged consideration. View it under four aspects. *How does God regard it?* What does he say of the inconsistent? "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not." How does he address himself to the inconsistent? "Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?" Thou "makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that

are more excellent, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes ; thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself ? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal ? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery ? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege ? thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonorest thou God ?” Such is his remonstrance. Let us ponder it while it may yet be of avail to us ; for when once he riseth up to call us into judgment, how shall we answer him ?

Wherein does his inconsistency affect a teacher himself ? It aggravates his guilt ; it ought to interfere with his comfort. In any Christian it is an evil of untold magnitude, but in one who professes to teach Christianity, its turpitude must be ten times greater. Drunkenness is a dreadful vice in any man ; but do we not justly reckon it a thing of greater heinousness, and more fearful danger, when detected in a sentinel on duty, or in the driver of a railway engine, with the lives of many a score depending on his punctuality and care ? So of the teacher. If any man could perish alone in his iniquity, *he* cannot. If the light that he professes to hold forth is transmitted

through an impure atmosphere, he but renders the darkness more visible, and misleads where he pretends to guide. Of inconsistent teachers we learn something in the book of Proverbs, where, in four short verses, we are told how useless is their work, and how halting their progress, how unsuitable their elevation to office, and how great, though often unperceived, the injury to themselves. "He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool, cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage. The legs of the lame are not equal ; so is a parable in the mouth of fools. As he that putteth a gem among a heap of stones (*margin*) ; so is he that giveth honor to a fool. As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools."

But is it not true, in the latter of these cases, that when the time of inebriated sleepiness passes away, there is a waking up to a sense of the smart ? And is it not also true that a teacher's inconsistency is a thing calculated, on reflection, to fill him with uneasiness and self-reproach ? When he expatiates on a duty which he himself neglects, is his conscience at rest ? Does he never rouse up to a consciousness of his moral disintegrity ? Does no inward voice upbraid him with the cry, "Physician, heal thyself ?" Do the words of advice and entreaty never falter on his tongue, by reason of memory's secret

whisperings as to his own delinquency? Has he no restless apprehension, lest his words and works should ever come into comparison either in this world or the next? Surely it must be so at times, save in those cases, few, we hope, where the conscience has been seared.

But it must be asked further, *How does such inconsistency affect the world?* It gives the adversaries of the Lord occasion to blaspheme. It causes the finger of scorn to be held up in ridicule, as if the gospel of Christ, and the spirit of Christ had no power to sanctify the feelings and the doings of men. It causes Christian effort to be derided and Christian churches to be decried. It brings a scandal on the good cause, and on all the noble schemes which are on foot for its promotion. It fills Zion with mourning, and casts the crown of beauty from her head. It provokes from her foes the shout of unhallowed victory, and excites the impious cry, "Ah! so would we have it."

Yet once more; *how does the teacher's inconsistency, if detected, affect his class?* What shall be the result to them, if they live to know that he from whose lips they first learned God's righteous law, has been found wanting when weighed in the balances only of this world's morality? The consequences will be varied according to the state of mind and tendency of heart in each. If

any of them are sincere Christians, they will mourn and tremble. They will scarcely be able to imagine that one whom they so long revered can have been a hypocrite; and they will be tempted to apply to themselves the prophetic imagery, "Howl, fir-tree, for the cedar is fallen; howl, ob ye oaks of Bashan, for the forest of the vintage is come down!" Well for them, if this thought does no more than awake in them a salutary dread of apostacy, and lead them to cleave with fuller purpose of heart to him who alone can preserve them from falling. But, alas for them, if—as is but too likely—they are so shaken and dispirited as to "go mourning all their days," distrustful of the power and the promise of a covenant-keeping God.

Others, perhaps, are only inquirers, well-disposed but undecided. Not a few of these will probably be induced to follow where their teacher led the way. They will remember what he did, better than what he said. Their ideas of moral duty and Christian requirement having been lowered, they in their turn will seek to unite the service of God and mammon. Like their erring guide, they will be zealous in outward forms of holiness and ostentatious deeds of charity, while running with eager feet in the paths of secret dishonesty. And yet a third section of the class will be drawn down, it may

be, into the depths of blasphemy and atheism, deeming the words they have heard from such a teacher to be nothing better than hollow and meaningless imposture.

In conclusion, let it not be imagined that the inconsistencies of teachers are productive of evil only when they are gross in their nature, and public in their notoriety. The teacher is at all times more closely watched than he is aware of. It may be that his every look is noted. The thoughtless act of levity, the passing expression of discontent, the muttered accents of pride, the gorgeous trappings of vanity, the evasive words that cloak a falsehood, the selfish indulgence of sloth, the foolish emulation of rivalry, the pettish explosions of envy, the fretful gesture of impatience, may go further than we suspect to neutralize the influence of our teachings. Archbishop Leighton has said that "a minister's life is the life of his ministry;" and not less true is the saying of Ralph Venning, that "the sins of teachers are the teachers of sin."

CHAPTER V.

PRAYERFULNESS OF SOUL.

THOSE who rightly estimate the responsibilities connected with the Sunday-school work will see ample cause to ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?" and would find abundant reason to despair, were it not for the possibility of adding, "Our sufficiency is of God." But thanks to his mercy, our every effort may be a "striving according to his working which worketh in us mightily;" and thanks to him no less, that the working of his power is always an "effectual working." We are not called to go on this warfare in our own might. Self-trust would be the surest road to disappointment. "I will go in the strength of the Lord" is the resolution we must make and keep, if we would not have it said to us, as was threatened to the Israelites, "Your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield her increase." Let the Lord be at our right hand, and we shall not be moved. Let him put words in our mouth, and we shall not speak fruitlessly. Let him pour out the

influences of his Holy Spirit, then our sowing will yield a large and a rich harvest.

For this, however, he must be "inquired of to do it." If success is to come from on high, then from above it must be sought. It is those who "wait on the Lord" that "shall renew their strength." Our feet must often tread the mountain-heights of communion with God, if we would be prepared to carry down a blessing to the dwellers in the vale beneath. We must drink often of "the brook in the way," if we would "lift up the head," and go on our course rejoicing. Prayer is needful alike for ourselves and for our charge. For ourselves we have much to crave. We have to implore mercy to pardon our sins and shortcomings in the past, as well as grace to fit us for duty in the future. We have to supplicate that we may be taught first what we have to teach, and then how to teach it. We have to entreat that God will put light into our heads, life into our souls, and love into our hearts. We have to ask that he will purify our motives, quicken our zeal, clear away our remaining darkness, and make us what he would have us to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

For our scholars we must pray as well as for ourselves. Individually, naming them one by one, making mention of them each in turn. Appropriately, too, asking that the hard heart may

be melted, the rebellious will subdued, the careless soul awakened, the anxious inquirer illumined from on high, the penitent brought to the foot of the cross, the bereaved made to partake of heavenly consolation, the young disciple led on from strength to strength, and enabled to run up with enlargedness of heart in the way of God's commands.

There must be constancy in prayer. Pray before you enter on your work ; for "the preparation of the heart," both in teacher and in pupil, "is from the Lord." Pray in the midst of your work. While to your class your lips are repeating the admonition, "Consider what I say," your heart may be following it up by the petition for one and all, "The Lord give thee understanding." Pray after your work. David, when he had given the injunction, "Thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart," offered the corresponding petition, "Give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes." It has been well said, "Every wise teacher will make the subject of his instructions the specific matter of his intercessions."

There must be union in prayer. There is a promise expressly made in behalf of "two or three" who shall agree together "as touching

any thing that they shall ask." The teachers' prayer-meeting should not be heedlessly neglected. There may be some who cannot conveniently attend it. If held on the Sabbath, they may find it too fatiguing; if held on the week-evenings, they may be precluded from facing the night-air. For all such, allowance should be made. They may be united with their brethren in spirit, and may observe a *concert* for prayer, by presenting their own secret petitions at the very time when they know their fellow-laborers are offering theirs in the social gathering. One in heart, they shall reap a common blessing. But they who are willfully neglectful of the united exercise, need not wonder if the blessing rests on adjacent classes, while their own is still unwatered with heavenly influence. Let there be a readiness, not only to attend the prayer-meeting, but to take part in it. There should be no room for shyness in a thing like this. If we are addressing our words to the King of Kings, the Ancient of Days, why be discomposed at the thought of the fellow-mortals who surround us, and who are but the creatures of a day? If we think of them at all, let us think of them only as sympathizing friends, who can understand our timidity, who can overlook our deficiencies, who can gather, even from our most faltering petitions, the full desires which we would fain outbreathe.

While there is a "continuing instant in prayer," there must also be a "watching unto the same." The answer must be expected and looked for. If it tarry long, still it must be waited for. If, after kneeling on Carmel's summit, we go forth and look toward the sea, it is true that for a while we may discern nothing but the raging billows of pride, the rising tide of worldliness, the unruffled sky of a false and fatal peace; but what of that? again we must pray, and again we must look; yet again, and yet again; for if our faith and patience fail not, the time will surely come when there shall be the indications, small at first, but rapid in their spread, the indications of a happy change, which, though it may be ushered in by clouds, and darkness, and tempest, shall nevertheless be a passing from dearth to plenty, and from death to life.

"Watching unto prayer" is to be combined "with thanksgiving." The teacher who is most prayerful and most expectant, is the least likely to sacrifice to his own net, and burn incense to his own drag. The victory which is recognized as an answer to supplication, will never be arrogated as an achievement of our own right hand. The heart that in conscious weakness and humble dependence has cried, "Oh, Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity," is likely, with sincerest

gratitude, to join in the chorus, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake." He who claims for himself the honor of any good which has been accomplished through his instrumentality, is either one who has altogether neglected to pray over his work, or has already forgotten that he so prayed. It is when supplication has frequently winged its heavenward flight, and its answer has been believingly looked for, that there is inclination felt, as well as cause given, for the "cheerful song, 'Hear what the Lord hath done for me.'"

When thus we acknowledge the work to be "the Lord's doing, and marvelous in our eyes," then it is that we may lawfully "rejoice and be glad" in it. The Apostle Paul could safely say to his converts, "Ye are our glory and joy," because he knew *and felt* that "neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." The more he honors us with success, the lower should we sink in our own eyes, and the higher should we raise our notes of adoring gratitude. It was when Peter's net was filled to breaking that he was led to cry, "I am a sinful man, O Lord;" and it is whenever we realize the conversion of a single soul to be a work which transcends all human power, that we shall own our entire

indebtedness to grace, and shall be ready to check every incipient tendency to vain boasting, by the self-remonstrance, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" for "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven."

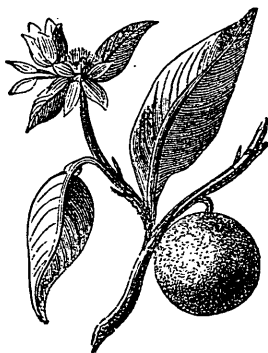
The deeper our humility, the more abundant may be our hope. We shall see with thankfulness that the result of our labor lies in a mightier and a wiser hand than ours, even in the hand of him who can employ the weakest of instrumentalities in the highest of causes, and who can crown the feeblest efforts with success.

"The coarsest reed that trembles in the marsh,
If Heaven select it for its instrument,
May shed celestial music on the breeze
As clearly as the pipe, whose virgin gold
Befits the lips of Phœbus."

Our every faculty should be diligently improved, and strenuously exercised; yet our hopes must rest, not on any merit or any fitness of our own, but solely on the grace—the fullness of the grace—of God. It is when our "expectation is from him," that such anticipation may warrantably be large.

Humble hope will breathe itself forth in renewed prayer. If one good gift has been bestowed, there are others yet to be besought.

If one brand has been "plucked from the burning," there are others yet in danger of the "unquenchable fire." But is the Lord's arm shortened that it cannot save, or his ear heavy that it cannot hear? Is not he who healed one, capable of extending a gracious cure to tens, twenties, hundreds? And if we dare not limit his power, shall we venture to set bounds to his grace? Surely as "he hath been mindful of us," we have cause to trust that "he will bless us" yet again. The more we ask, the more he is likely to grant us; and the more he gives, the more he thereby encourages us to ask.



PART II.

THE TEACHER'S OFFICIAL QUALIFICATIONS.



“THE things that thou hast heard of me,..... the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

This verse, were it historic instead of horatory, might be regarded as the tracing of a spiritual genealogy, and the position which young Timothy would hold in the pedigree, is precisely that in which all Sunday-school teachers should consider themselves placed. Each of them has had a spiritual father in Christ Jesus; but each is now called to be a father and guide to others, and is so to train them that these in their turn may rise up to fill his place, and to perpetuate the Christian succession. In this seemingly simple idea lies involved a momentous truth as to the extent and magnitude of our work. From first to last we must keep it before our view that we are not merely teachers of the young, but teachers of future teachers. “The disciple,” let it be remembered, “is not above his master.” The

errors into which an instructor falls, his scholars will probably repeat. The faults in which he indulges, may be imbibed and transmitted, like an hereditary disease. His indolence or incapacity, his lukewarmness or worldly-mindedness, may be handed down, like a family curse. Whereas, if he is found faithful, his pupils may possibly bear his image, and inherit his blessing.

"I gave my class an old lesson of yours, last Sunday," was the remark made to Mrs. Binfield, when visiting a former scholar; "it was the lesson on the building of Solomon's temple; and my girls felt just the same about it as I remember I did; for when I told them the subject the week before, they didn't seem to take to it, any more than I did when you named it to us; but when the lesson was over, they all seemed pleased with it, and one of them said she never thought it could be made so interesting." Here was the perpetuation of good. And that not in a solitary instance. Seven of Mrs. Binfield's class had become teachers, and all were treading, more or less, in her steps. One of them, recollecting how her teacher, in going through the life of David, had varied, and at the same time illustrated the course, by the chronological interspersing of those Psalms whose exact date is known, was now giving a series of lessons on the history of St. Paul, and interweaving with it

such chapters from the Epistles as might throw light on the history of the different churches planted by the apostle. Another, setting especial value on the written papers which, week by week, had been prepared for herself and her fellow-scholars, was zealous in writing similar documents for her own class. Thus were the plans and efforts of one mind reproduced and multiplied in the imitative schemes and labors of those whom she had guided.

Take the ensuing by way of contrast.

“Not one but was formerly in Mr. Crompton’s class!” was the remark made at a teachers’ meeting, on looking round at the minority who had just been out-voted in their opposition to a system of uniform lessons. Here again was the perpetuation of influence, most visibly marked. But was it for good or for evil? This remained to be seen. These nine teachers had an unquestionable right to vote according to private judgment. If each honestly deemed an individual selection of lessons more conducive to the welfare of the school at large, then, whether right or wrong in his opinion, each had a right to express it. Up to this point, therefore, neither they nor their exemplar were necessarily to blame. But Mr. Crompton was well remembered in the school, remembered as one who would succumb to no authority, one who carried

out all his own ideas in defiance of rules and votes, no matter what the risk of breaking up outward order and social harmony. Gone away from the neighborhood himself, the effects of his example yet remained. The above mentioned minority, as might be expected from youths of his training, proved refractory. They refused even to try how the new plan would work, and left no stone unturned to win others to their "party," as they invidiously and unchristianly termed it; nay, painful to relate, when they had mustered a strong enough force, they broke into an open mutiny, and at the next meeting for business, proceeded to turn overboard the zealous officers, who, for many a past year, had guided that tempest-tossed bark with steady helm, and practised eye, and long-continued success.

We here describe what we have seen only from afar off; but we describe it, because it furnishes an instance in point. If it awakens the exclamation, "How great a matter a little fire kindleth!" it may also lead us to note more fully the responsibility of him who struck the first dangerous spark. The spirit cherished, as well as the system pursued by an instructor, is likely to re-appear in those who pass from under his moulding hand.

"As is the mother, so is her daughter," says a proverb cited in holy writ; and we may take for

its parallel, "As the teacher, so the taught." Exceptions may occur, but such will be the rule. If, therefore, we would have our scholars to rise up as competent instructors when we are no more, we must expressly train them for the work by being to them what we would have them to be to the next generation. It behooves us not merely to teach, but to teach *well*. Let us inquire what are the official qualifications requisite to secure this end.



CHAPTER I.

TACT FOR TUITION.

IT is indubitable that there is in some an aptness to teach. Surround them with pupils, and they are in their element, happy themselves, and making the young hearts around them happy too. They gain a ready influence, they establish a prompt sympathy, they fix the listener's gaze, they arrest his willing attention, they impart knowledge to his mind quickly, easily, pleasantly. The gift is an enviable one. But we shall be mistaken if we conclude that this tact is solely a matter of native tendency. There can be no doubt that it is to a great extent acquirable. It may be implanted, cultivated, developed. Indeed it is oftentimes in a man, when it has never yet been brought out of him. Many a modest, self-distrustful soul possesses the inestimable boon, but is all unconscious of its existence, because his latent powers have not been roused into energy. And even where the coveted talent is not among a man's natural gifts, it may yet be gained by the diligent use of such endowments as have already been conferred. Marvels, not a

few, have been accomplished in the training of eye or ear where artistic or musical powers had long lain dormant; and if such is the dominion that instruction and practice can exercise over the bodily senses, much more surely and more easily may we expect earnest and well-directed effort to tell with power on the mental faculties.

Possibly one cause why so many despair of attaining to any thing like facility in the art of teaching, consists in the vague notions they have as to the essentials of that art. It may be well to number up a few of the leading particulars which combine to characterize and evidence a true aptness for the work.

1. *Simplicity in speech.* Fine words are very well in their place, but that place is not the Sunday-school. An author may use them if he pleases, when writing for adults—at least when such phrases come across him naturally, without his intentional seeking after them; he may use them, we say, because his readers have opportunity to ascertain their meaning, if so they are minded, and will find an advantage in the exercise, whereas if they are too indolent to make research, the fault is theirs, not his. Far otherwise in the school-room. There the instruction is oral, and the instructed are young; the spoken words are either apprehended at the instant, or they are entirely lost. To speak in

phrases beyond the reach of our hearers' intelligence, is to shoot our arrow yards high into the air, when our proper aim lies but a few feet above the ground. To speak in unknown words is to all intents and purposes the same as speaking in an unknown tongue. 1 Cor. xiv. 6-9, would be a fitting Saturday evening's portion for a teacher to pursue and ponder.

Observe, however, that in the primitive church, it was lawful to speak with unknown tongues, when the exercise of that miraculous gift was accompanied by a "revelation, an interpretation, a doctrine." And, in like manner there are words difficult to be understood which must yet be used, but used with a painstaking effort to make their meaning clear. We dare not discard the terms, "justification," "regeneration," "sanctification," "adoption," "atonement," &c., for they occur in our hallowed text-book. We shall not altogether do wisely to avoid such terms as "Trinity," "incarnation," "omnipresence," "immutability," "millennium," &c., so long as they continue to be heard from our pulpits. The "unknown" we must explain, but never in words that are "less known." We must seek to teach as God himself instructs us in his word. Scripture is uniformly simple, and grand in its simplicity. Its pictures are effective, but never exaggerated; its imagery is rich, but never far-

fetches ; its teachings are unfathomable as the ocean depths, but lucid as the summer-brook ; its "commandments are exceedingly broad," yet "the way-faring men, though fools," need "not err therein." If it treats of ordinary narrative, it tells its tale in ordinary phrase. If it treats of Christian doctrines, it gives them fitting designations, while yet it brings their significance to view. It uses "great plainness," and at the same time "great boldness of speech." Be it ours to do the like. Beneath the simplicity of our language, there must be a foundation of sound sense. We must stoop to the level of the young mind, but like the parent-bird, in order to raise it on our wings, and teach it a loftier flight. We must have "compassion on the ignorant ;" and, like the Greatest of Teachers, we must say little by little, as the untutored mind is able to bear it ; but yet like him, we must mark each stage of progress, when it is wise to take a higher tone, so that "from that time forth" we may give more advanced lessons, and prepare the way for a yet further ascent. We must bear in mind the days when we also were children, spake as children, understood as children, and thought as children. We must talk now, as then we loved that others should talk to us ; and we must lead our young charge on gently, step by step, neither expecting nor wishing that childish things should be

put away at once, but assured that the time for this will arrive, and seeking that when it does come, they may stand forth, not only men, but godly men,—not godly men alone, but intelligent in their piety.

2. *Clearness in statement* is equally necessary. It is possible to use none but short and easy words, yet so to use them that our meaning is still hopelessly obscured. Perhaps attention to this point is even more necessary than to the foregoing,—at all events, not less so. A child may often be able to catch the meaning of terms he never heard before, if only there is such a transparency in the context that they shine, as it were, in a reflected light; and in this case he will profit far more, than if he had listened to a series of infantile expressions strung together in confused and meaningless array. Let a thing be either misty or muddled, and children will be neither interested nor improved.

Lucidness of expression will generally accompany accuracy of thought. When we know not how to set about explaining a matter, the secret is that we do not rightly understand it. When we have only a sort of floating notion of a thing, we cannot be expected to give a just definition of its nature. Perspicuity requires even more than this. Not only must there be precision of thought, but there must be a habit of looking at

things on all sides. We must not be satisfied to use modes of speech that are in themselves accurate ; we must see to it that they be capable of no false interpretation. "What offerings were day by day presented in the Jewish temple ?" asked a teacher, who was recapitulating a lesson on the daily oblation. "They used *to crucify a lamb* every morning and evening to remind them Christ was coming." The answer showed that the child was mentally awake, that he clearly understood the frequency and the design of the sacrifice ; but here was a confusion of idea as to the mode in which the offering was presented. The teacher had not drawn a sufficiently wide line of distinction between the type and the Antitype ; the learner consequently had seized on what was incidental to the latter, and conceived of it as an essential attribute of the former.

Even words strictly correct may produce an incorrect impression, if they stand alone. "The perfection of teaching," says Dean Swift, "is so to explain a thing that you cannot be misunderstood." To attain this art, we must fancy ourselves in the learner's place ; we must think how the subject would have to be unfolded to us, if we were divested of all previous acquaintance with it ; we must picture to our imagination the difficulties that are likely to perplex a child, and

the misconceptions that are likely to lead him astray.

3. *Liveliness in manner* is indispensable. Teach in a dull, prosing way, and children cease to listen. Life and lightsomeness are the very element of their being. Monotony and drowsiness are their utter aversion. Hammer sturdily, and, as you redouble your strokes, their thoughts will but fly off the faster like the sparks from the anvil. It is not the thumper who is the best musician, nor the heavy-handed who is the best colorist, neither is it the pompous teacher who succeeds best in his work. The sprightliest melodies may have a power to rivet the ear; the lightest touches may be the most effective in producing the result that meets the eye; and the cheeriest accents may sink the most ineffaceably into the heart. Nothing will do with children but animation. Their whole composition, physical and mental, demands vivacity on the part of all who deal with them. Vivacity, we say, and not boisterousness; for they are acute enough to perceive, though they may not understand, the difference between bustle and activity, vociferation and vigor. Vivacity, we say again, and not levity. It is the elasticity, and not the lightness of air, which emblems what we want. Jocoseness is far removed from true joy. Instruction,

not mere amusement, is the duty devolving on us.

This vivacity, too, must be genuine, not assumed. If it be worn as a mask, the keen eye of a child will soon detect that there is something amiss, something uncongenial, something that can have no sympathy with him, nor he with it. We own that there are some who appear, when looked at from a distance, to go through ordinary life with listlessness of manner and dejectedness of mien, while yet they prove efficient teachers of the young. But this is capable of easy explanation. It is because there is in their character more of real than of apparent vigor, and because in the work of teaching is most fully elicited the vividness of the life within them. In the class-room, more easily than elsewhere, they can succeed in laying aside for a season their own burden, and in finding for the time their own heart's youth renewed; while childhood, detesting as it does every thing like pretension or parade, repelled as it is by the hollow mockery of glee, can look up confidently into the meek, quiet, smiling eye, whose glance is radiant with truth and love. The more liveliness we can command the better, so long as it is a sincere thing and sound, truly reflecting a buoyant life within, as well as truly kept in subjec-

tion to the graver duties and more solemn interests which we would have it to subserve.

As manner, so matter, must, within due bounds, be made lively and attractive. "Never preach," is the rule usually given to teachers; and the exhortation is a good one. Nothing formal, nothing stiff, nothing dry or jejune, must characterize a teacher's words. There is no need, however, to overstrain the advice. Let it not be construed into a prohibition of what is serious and earnest. Let it not be supposed to imply that a teacher is never to talk for any length of time continuously. So long as he can keep up the attention of his class when so doing, good and well; though the instant that this is likely to flag, he has talked enough, nay, too long. Let him take care also that while he does go on, it is talking, and not preaching. We do not say, Never speak solemnly by way of appeal; but we do say, Let it be the conversational pleading of an earnest friend, not the elaborate flow of words that would better suit a pulpit discourse.

4. *Variety in method* should be studied. Teaching should be combined with questioning, precept illustrated by anecdote, doctrines explained by analogy, the unseen represented by imagery taken from the seen. Proverb and parable, allegory and antithesis, simile and story, must lend their aid. The interrogatory and the

elliptic, the simultaneous and the rotatory, the collective and the individual methods may with advantage be interspersed. Now the questions may go round the class in order, and anon an inquiry be put out of turn to startle back the attention of some listless rogue who has been fancying himself at leisure to give heed to other things.

Various schemes, too, should be tried. Just as the daily teacher does well to study the Hamiltonian, Pestalozzian, Kinder-Garten, and other systems, taking a hint from this, and a suggestion from that, till he weaves up all that has commended itself to his judgment into an orderly and comprehensive system of his own, so the Sunday-school teacher, while he is not bound to tie himself down to the method of any one, may be expected to gain an acquaintance with the principles of all, to form an opinion on their individual merits, to blend into one harmonious whole the scattered notions which now here and now there he has picked up, and so to make use of one item or another as may best suit his present exigency.

Our reading-lessons, also, may vary in length and character. One week we may take a short portion, and go minutely into its every detail; the very next week we may take a wider range, and produce in bold relief the outline of an

entire discourse. We shall aim at times to give a general knowledge of Scripture, as a whole, in the chronological continuity of its historic thread,—one branch of biblical knowledge in which we fear most scholars in our Sunday-schools are still greatly deficient. Perhaps some teachers neglect this, from an idea that it should be reserved for senior-classes. We think it should not be so. It is difficult to unlearn a wrong impression; and therefore from the outset, we should seek to prevent the notion that Isaiah lived before Jonah, or Nehemiah before Daniel, according to the order of priority in the English version.—And on other occasions we shall be careful to bring out the minor beauties which mark one or other of its episodic biographies. We shall take care to trace the diversities which mark the style of the various inspired penmen; but while so doing, we shall not fail to point out those coincidences, some palpable, and some latent, which clearly evince the overruling of the one Divine Inspirer.

5. *Readiness in illustration* must be mentioned as another desirable attainment. For this purpose, Scripture may be compared with Scripture. A command may be explained by an instance of one who obeyed or disobeyed it. A prophecy may be read clearly in the light of its fulfillment. One text may be impressed on the memory by a reference to others that confirm or prove it.

Thus, as example of an advanced method of this kind:—Suppose a child is to learn for his next lesson the angels' song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing," it might be shown how each of these things was one that Christ in his human nature had given up, when he came from heaven to earth for us and our salvation: thus, he abdicated *power*, John v. 30; *riches*, 2 Cor. viii. 9; *wisdom*, Luke ii. 52; *strength*, 2 Cor. xiii. 4; *honor*, Isa. liii. 3; *glory*, Phil. ii. 7, 8; and *blessing*, Gal. iii. 13.

But it is not on the field of Revelation alone that we can glean illustrative truths. Amid the walks of Nature, of Science, and of Art, may be found abundant materials ready to our hand. Where the fancy is in lively exercise, and the power of descrying an analogy is strong, this part of a teacher's work is comparatively easy; though especial heed should then be taken, lest exuberance or lawlessness should mark the imagery employed. There are certain rules which need to be observed. First. Illustrations should be distinct. Our canvas must not be over-charged with multitudinous figures, and loaded with superfluous ornaments. Every object we introduce must have its independent purpose.

Secondly. There must be appropriateness.

There is such a thing as to "darken counsel by words without knowledge," and there is a danger also lest we conceal our meaning beneath the rubbish of confused and inapt metaphors. The congruousness of a similitude ought to be self-evident. "The world is round, and the heart of man three-nooked ; *therefore* this can never be filled with that," said an old Cameronian divine. We must have no such crude analogies, or doubtful sequences. The beauty, as well as the usefulness, of parabolic language, lies in its manifest adaptation to the teaching it is designed to convey. Though allegory may serve us as a veil, when the glory of a divine truth would be too dazzling for the feeble eye, it must always be a transparent one that shall let the features be recognizable in their attempered radiance.

Thirdly. Our illustrations should be subordinate. They must be used, not for their own, but for their teaching's sake. The thoughts should not be finally arrested by the figure, but rapidly carried on to that which it represents. Comparisons have been well likened to house-windows, which are intended to let in heaven's pure light, and open to view the prospect that lies outstretched beyond the casement ; but which, if they were gorgeously stained, would transmit a tinted ray and exclude the view of

all but themselves and the lustrous forms delineated on their surface.

Fourthly. Illustrations should be dignified. We must never lower sacred themes by the use of analogies that border on the low or the ludicrous. A writer on "Female Improvement" has judiciously observed, "In endeavoring to bring spiritual subjects to the level of children's minds, we must beware of so lowering them as to take off from the reverence with which they should be regarded. Our language, in communicating them, though simple and child-like, should still be solemn and serious; our illustrations, though apt and familiar, not undignified nor mean." This advice is especially adapted to our younger teachers. Those who are placed over our scripture classes may heed the next remark, wherein Mrs. Sandford continues, "Let us not attempt to strip sublime truths of their halo of mystery, nor to reduce them to the *sensible* apprehensions of our children." The existence of mystery is a necessary condition probably of creature-existence, certainly of creature-existence in this its probationary state. It is a salutary discipline of our reason, a needful test of our faith. The mind of a child, if untampered with by the foolish effort to make every thing plain to it, is peculiarly prepared to rest with humble and reverential confidence beneath the shadow of an

acknowledged difficulty. Remove his submissiveness, his proper self-diffidence, and you are doing your best to make harder for him that entrance to the kingdom of heaven which hinges on the reception of the gospel in the lowly obedient spirit of a little child. Lead him to expect that every thing is to be made clear, and when the evil day of temptation comes, it may be seen that you have sadly facilitated the growth of Infidelity's rank tares. Teach the child to use his reasoning powers, but to keep reason in subjection to faith. Search out and bring before him all that Scripture says *about* the mystery, but do not attempt to explain that mystery *away*. See that, by false interpretation, you do not make the matter more mysterious, but see also that you do not attempt to make it less mysterious, than God has made it. Show your scholar that every thing around him and within him has in it more or less that is incomprehensible. Make him feel that his very being is an enigma to himself. When you are able to give him the *why* of any thing, or even the very reason of that reason, by all means do so; but when you cannot, and when you believe that none can, you must honestly and manfully confess it to be impossible. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" is a question it behooves us to

ponder in these days of Rationalism, and a question that may well silence any ill-judged efforts to penetrate the "clouds and darkness" which must ever rest around the throne of the Inscrutable. Let us be content that on the cloud we can discern for ourselves, and point out to our young charge, the bright bow of gospel-mercy, the unmistakable indication that he who sits upon the throne is the God of unchanging love.

Fifthly. We must notice the question, Are our images necessarily to be drawn from objects with which the class are already familiar? There are strong opinions on both sides. Some would quote the sentiment given us by the author of Darnley, "whatever impressions are intended to be produced on the mind of man are always best received when addressed to his heart through its most common associations; whether we wish to explain, to convince, to touch, or to engage, we must refer to something that is habitual and pleasing, and therefore the use of figures in eloquence is not so much to enrich and deck, as to find admission to the soul of the hearer by all the paths which its own habits have rendered most easy of access." Others, on the contrary, think that such access is oftenest gained by an unusual route, and that after enchaining the attention to some scientific

lesson, you can more successfully proceed by engrafting on this the higher instruction, and so end by the imparting of two kinds of knowledge instead of one. Perhaps the middle path is the safest course. Find, if you can, an illustration that is self-explicative, and that by its association with every-day scenes will be apt to recur often to the memory. In default of such, choose one that can be explained in a brief sentence or two, like the famous "*iodine*" simile which is so often held up in the present day as a pattern to teachers. "Chemists tell us that a single grain of the substance called *iodine* will impart color to 7000 times its weight of water. It is so in the higher affairs of life. One companion, one book, one habit, may affect the whole life and character," &c. Or should the scientific analogy you have chosen be one that cannot be made clear in a few compressed sentences, then by all means forego the image which would lead you too far astray from your main point.

The length of our illustration is a thing that must greatly depend on the age and intelligence of the children, and on the alertness of their minds to catch the force of a resemblance. In the scripture class it may suffice to say, "One flaw spoils a bell, and one sin ruins a soul." In the elementary class, if the same image is employed, there may be need to be a slight lingering

first, on the idea of a bell, and how it ought to sound, and how little a thing may prevent its ringing clear;—a separate reference to the soul, and how it was made to praise God joyfully, but how sin—even the smallest sin—turns our happiness to wo;—and then it may be shown how, just as the bell can be melted down, and re-cast, or made new, so God can renew our hearts, and cause us to put forth the sounds of a true and well-regulated gladness. Again; an advanced scholar will not need any explanation of such a sentence as this:—"The slightest fold in the carpet may overthrow a child; and the smallest stumbling-block may cause a Christian to fall, unless God in mercy holds him up." But the younger classes must have a picture drawn—of the snug warm nursery—the little child, just the age of some infant brothers or sisters of their own—the efforts of the tiny feet to keep their ground—the stepping forward, half-eager and half-afraid—the ruck which lies just in the way, ready to trip up the tottering footstep—the haste with which the father runs and snatches his loved little one from danger—the joy with which the child feels itself secure in those strong steady arms. And then must follow an attempt to show how, when we try to walk in the good way, our heavenly Father is watching us—how, though we are often ready to slide into sin, and

the least thing may be enough to overthrow us, he is ever willing to keep us from falling—and how our prayers to him should be in those easy words, “Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.”

6. *Judiciousness in questioning* is an invaluable art. Catechizing is an instrument of amazing force in a hand that knows how to wield it aright. There is nothing tends so surely to keep up the life and spirit of the lesson, or the eager attention of the class. Questioning may subserve a threefold purpose. As a gauge, it may help us to ascertain the extent of knowledge a child already possesses. As a key, it may unlock the door of the mind, and open a way for the entrance of new truth. As an index, it may serve to mark the gradual advance of wisdom’s sunlight and the recession of the shades of ignorance. It shows us what needs to be taught, it helps us in the teaching, and it indicates the result attained.

One immense advantage secured by it is that the pupil, instead of being a merely passive recipient of knowledge, has an active part to perform. Of the Greek sage, who may be regarded as having originally founded this mode of instruction, and from whom indeed it is often called “the Socratic method,” it has been said, “He did not reason before, but with, his pupils, and thus exercised an irresistible power over their minds. He obliged them to *think for themselves*,

and if there was any capacity in a man, it could not fail to be excited by his conversation." This may well be your example, fellow-teacher. Remember that your work is to direct a child's thought, and not to save him the trouble of thinking. You are to be a guide, and not a bearer. It is for you to show him the highway, and to keep him from wandering, but the labor of walking in it must be his own. Carry him, when he ought to be learning the use of his own limbs, and he is likely to be a cripple all his days. Instill into a child knowledge ready-made, and when he passes from under your care, he will be likely to go through life picking up whatever falls in his way, without much power of discriminating between good and evil; but develop his reasoning powers, and when he goes abroad into the world, he will know how to exercise them, and will have the power, if not the inclination, to form a judgment of his own on matters of right and wrong.

A second advantage of this interrogatory system, is the sure and solid foundation which it lays by the gradual impartation of ideas. It prevents that vaulting at consequences which, to the teacher, might be an easy, almost unconscious effort, but which to the scholar would ensure a fall. Difficulty, like a narrow but unfordable torrent, may be over-leaped at a bound by the

practiced intellect; but if the untrained would pass across it in safety, they must urge their steps slowly and steadily along the well-constructed argument that spans the gulf. The pathway to the bridge may be circuitous, but it is the surest, and therefore in the end the speediest route. "The best teachers"—so we read—"are those who can seem to forget what they know full well; who work out results, which have become axioms in their minds, with all the interest of a beginner, and with footsteps no longer than his."

Yet once more. The catechetical mode is profitable by reason of the hold which it takes upon the memory. The remark of Archdeacon Bather is often cited :—"The little matter which a child has told you, he will remember, which is better than having a wise saying of yours to forget." No wonder it should be so. Was the answer correct? It is remembered as one that met with approbation. Was it wrong? The remembrance of the mistake is associated with a recollection of the manner so winning and so wise wherewith he was shown where his error lay. He who has given a right answer, may clasp the truth to his heart with the loving recognition of an old friendship; he who has made an incorrect reply, may no less cordially welcome his consequent introduction to a truth, which

though a new, he doubts not is yet a valuable acquaintance.

How and when to catechize are things which experience can best demonstrate. As a general rule it may be said, Question freely, but not formally. If you have nothing but question and answer, the process will become wearisome. Interrogation must give place to description. What a child cannot find out by his own thinking, it will be needful to tell him; and the change will be a relief. The elliptical mode of teaching takes an intermediate place between the question and the statement. In the midst of what you are telling or describing, you pause, with a slightly rising inflection of the voice. This is equivalent to a silent inquiry. The child fills in the hiatus. You have obtained the desired reply, and you quietly proceed with what you had to say. The thread of the narrative or the explanation has not been broken, while yet you have given the listener something to do, and have thereby at once tested and prolonged the attention he is paying.

As to the kind of questions to be asked, it is the wisest course to advise that they be neither too difficult nor too easy. None should be put that must be inevitably beyond the possibility of a child's answering. Break it up into several smaller ones, and you may ultimately attain your

end ; but ask it in its unsimplified form, and you are sure to obtain nothing but a gross blunder or a vacant stare. On the other hand, let not your questions be reduced to such a *minimum* that the very feeblest intellect shall have to put forth no effort in the reply. Some there are who tell us never to ask a question that can be answered by "yes" or "no." This may be going somewhat too far. Perhaps it might be better to qualify it thus—never ask a question of the sort, without following it up by "Why?" or "Why not?" and in due time your class will be so habituated to the succession of queries, that, anticipating what will follow, they will of their own accord append the reason to their affirmative or negative response.

Our scale of questions must be graduated. The more juvenile classes must have what are more elementary. "Who went?"—"Where did he go?"—"What did he go for?"—"Who went with him?" and similar inquiries, must elicit every separate idea in a verse, and must, as it were, turn it round to be looked at in every direction. A higher class will require interrogations of a less simple kind. Thus, in the reading of John xxi. 7:—

"What was there characteristic in Peter's casting himself into the sea, as soon as John had told him Christ was there?" and "How

came he to cast himself into the sea at once, instead of saying, as he had done on a former occasion, 'If it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water?'"

The first question will be instantly answered, if Peter's history has been the subject of recent study, and if his character has been set forth as a compound of rash impulsiveness and ardent love.

The second query will perhaps cause a moment's hesitancy. One boy, of ready intelligence, but little patience, or else little practice of thought, may exclaim, "Because this time he was sure it was Christ, and the other time he wasn't." The lad has caught one point of difference, but not that which applies to the matter in hand. He is quietly asked, "If Peter had known it for certain, in the former of those instances, would he then have cast himself quite as readily into the sea as he did now?" and in an instant several voices are ready to cry, "I have it, teacher; this time he was so near shore he could swim; but before, he was far out at sea, and a dark stormy night."

The way in which an answer is to be received is a subject that has repeatedly been discussed. Some advise that a learner's reply should never be pronounced wrong, but be accepted as if correct, and then have its errors gradually and

almost insensibly softened down, and rubbed off, and filed away, till it has been polished into what it should have been. We hardly think this fair and honest ; nor, were it so, do we think it advantageous. Self-sufficiency is not the quality we would wish to nurture in a child. Do not let him take the credit which is by no means his due. If he is wrong, then kindly but candidly let him know it. This will not discourage him. He does not expect to be always right. Take his answer as it is ; show him how far it is correct, and how far incorrect ; and then see if he cannot for himself substitute the true response for the erroneous one.

It would be well, moreover, to let children see that we never mean to be content with generalizing answers. When they can give us the whole truth, we must never be satisfied with anything short of it. Let them mend their answer again and again, till they have made it full and comprehensive. "When does God see us?" said a teacher to an infant-class scholar. "Now and always," was the immediate reply ;—neither half of which would have been sufficient, if it had stood alone. Children who would answer only "Now," might possibly be found imagining that, in the house of God, or in the school-room, they were under an inspection which did not follow them to their homes. Children who

would say no more than "Always," might be found losing sight of an important specific truth, while acknowledging what is more universal, and therefore more vague.

When an incorrect reply is given, it is often difficult to pronounce an exact judgment on the cause. Whether the error should be ascribed to ignorance or forgetfulness, to listlessness or incapacity, nay, we might even say to the teacher or the scholar, is no easy matter to decide.

"Lot also, which went with Abraham, had flocks, and herds, and tents." Q. "Of what use were his flocks and herds?" A. "He could kill them, teacher, for food." Q. "And of what use were tents to him?" A. (*By the same child.*) "To preach in." This was a mistake that arose from the little one's unacquaintedness with Oriental customs. Eager to give the best answer, she bethought herself naturally enough of the preaching-tents which she saw every Sunday all that summer through; and hence the error.

But take another case:—Samson "did grind in the prison-house." Q. "What did he grind?" "Knives and scissors, teacher," cried John Steadman. This answer was unlooked for; and well it might be, for John was a baker's son, and he above all others would be expected to think of corn-grinding rather than of the hone or the

strap. Clearly this was not a case of ignorance. Could the words, then, have been spoken in the spirit of mischief-making? There was some appearance of the kind, but such was not the fact. The matter lay thus. The teacher was a man accustomed to deal in deep questionings, and to overlook the meaning of little words and phrases; but happening the previous week to have read an article on this subject in the Teacher's Magazine, and recollecting it just at this moment, he suddenly deviated from his usual plan; and poor little Steadman, taken at unawares, thought that the furthest-fetched answer would prove most likely to be the one desired.

This example may serve to warn us, when we enter on a new track of instruction, not to do it with so violent a plunge as to bewilder those we wish to benefit; and not less may it indicate the necessity of carefully asking ourselves how far the mistaken answers given by our scholars owe their origin to the injudiciousness of the questions which ourselves propose. It is very much the best for all teachers to use question books in their classes. The advantages are many and great.

7. We may notice, briefly, that *keenness in observation* must not be overlooked as a requisite. It will not do for a teacher to be so absorbed in

his lesson as to lose sight of his scholars. His inward eye must not be so intently fixed on the subject-matter, and on his preconceived mode of presenting it, that he shall not be at leisure to cast an eye outward upon the physiognomy of the learners. Many an evil is thus incurred, and many a precious opportunity lost. The first sign of insubordination passes without being checked, and that mischief attains to a maturity which might have been crushed in the germ. Symptoms of incipient fatigue are unnoticed, and the wearied are allowed to become wearier. The smile that brightened up the countenance at the mention of some familiar name, or at the narration of some interesting anecdote, has been unseen, and therefore no effort is made to give a renewed pleasure of the like kind. The tear that glistens in the eye is unheeded, and the favorable moment for deepening the salutary impression has fled beyond recall. One who is "apt to teach" would pursue a far different course. He is like a captain, who, when he puts his hand to the rudder, still lets his eye rove along the whole line of deck, and sweep the entire horizon. Every danger is marked as it looms in the distance, and with instant speed is avoided. Every rope and spar is noted, and is kept available for immediate use. Now the sails have to be shortened, and now they are to be full set ;

now the helm is directed to larboard, and anon is made to veer to starboard; now the ship stands out to sea, and now runs along the shore; but shifting circumstance it is, and not wayward caprice, that dictates each successive change. Let not the instructor forget that he has to sway the mind,—the ever active, but oft inconstant and roving mind. Nor this alone, but an assemblage of volatile minds, each contributing by its restlessness to the agitation of the whole. Never can he succeed in this, but as he is prepared to mark and meet every fleeting impulse, every momentary emotion, every transient tendency, so that he may warn, control, or reprove, help, encourage, or command, as need may be. Quickness of eye to perceive at a glance, and versatility of genius to provide, at a moment's notice, what is appropriate to the emergency, well deserve to be ranked among the constituent elements of a teacher's tact for his employ.



CHAPTER II.

GENTLENESS OF SPIRIT.

It cannot be otherwise than that a teacher should be in frequent danger of having his spirit ruffled within him. Perversity in one child, and unimpressibleness in another—now stupidity, and then levity—here an incurable forgetfulness, and there an ineradicable selfishness—pride holding sway over this heart, and vanity over that one—must often tend to disturb his equanimity. Faithfulness to his duty demands that from time to time he should address himself to reasoning, remonstrance, and reproof. But never must he let anger rob him of his moral power, by disarming him of that patient forbearance which alone can maintain his influence. It may be that the very fact of having to rebuke is in itself an annoyance; but the feeling of irritation thus induced must ever be vigorously suppressed. Nothing will enable this but the cultivation of a meek and gentle spirit. When the troubled ocean, at its lowest depths, is raging and seething in restless fury, the brightest summer sun may fail to soothe its surface into aught resembling

composure; whereas, the tranquil lake, which lies serenely drinking in the peaceful influences of a cloudless sky, will not be ruffled into a wave, even by the sudden shock of the rudely-thrown pebble; but circle after circle, receding, as if in remonstrance, so softly from that central spot, will only serve to render more visible the wondrous placidity which thus, without any seeming effort, can throw off the effects of the accidental disturbance.

The gentleness of mind, to which we refer, ought to be habitual and uniform. Evenness of temper is indispensable in dealing with the young. It will not do for children to come to the school, feeling that things will go smoothly or roughly, according to the mood their teacher happens to be in. It must not be the "smile" one day, converted into the causeless "frown" on the morrow. The favor will be held cheap, which is held on so precarious a tenure as that of a fitful indulgence; and the reproofs will be despised, which are dealt unreasonably and unsparingly in some cross-grained hour. There must be no oscillation between the extremes of rigor and of kindness, but an even, steady admixture of the two,—the rigor attempered by lenity, and the kindness never allowed to degenerate into laxity.

Such an equable temper is highly conducive

to the preservation of a teacher's authority. Let children find that they are able to annoy, vex, thwart, disturb, and, for the sheer sake of putting that power in exercise, they will renew the attempt again and again, unknowing the discomfort they occasion, but inly conscious of having gained something like a momentary triumph. Let them ascertain by repeated experiment that they cannot put their teacher out of temper, and they will soon desist from the endeavor. He who is easily discomposed by little things, will have his causes of trouble multiplied tenfold by the very manifestation of his sensitiveness, just as he who chafes and raves at every midge that flits before his eye, finds his frantic gestures provocative of new conflicts, and every fresh struggle but tending to summon additional reinforcements to the aid of the less-than-pigmy foe.

The children's comfort is also secured by the teacher's uniform gentleness. Their young hearts are full of tender susceptibility. Like delicate saplings, they are easily blighted by an ungenial word, nipped by a chilling breath. Handle their emotions roughly, the leaflets shrink and wither away. Like a stringed instrument, their mental organization must not be overstrained; the chords of thought and feeling will, indeed, require raising to the true pitch, but the process must be gradual; wind them up too rapidly and too

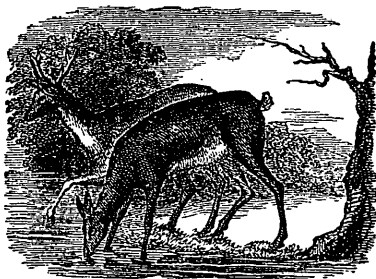
rudely, you snap them by your violence ; nay, if you persevere in such a course too stubbornly and too long, you may so warp the sounding board itself as to destroy its power of melody. The children of the poor especially claim the utmost kindness at our hand. They have many a sore trial in their comfortless homes ; and is it for us to add to the number of their griefs ? They will meet with many a sharp affliction as they tread their journey of life ; and it is not for us to antedate their sorrows by planting in their path one needless thorn.

The success of our work, too, is intimately connected with the loving spirit in which it is pursued. Let the instructor's mind be discomposed, and his expressions will become confused. Let the pupils' minds be nettled by his sharpness, and truth, at such a time, will find no entrance into their intellects or souls. The teacher can impart and the learner acquire information with greater facility, when the mind of both the one and the other is set free from those "small inquietudes and insect-stings," which a system of perpetual and peevish fault-finding causes each party, by turns, to endure and to inflict. Suavity in the teacher contributes much to his persuasive power. The quieter the tone, so that it be not sleepy, in which a truth is uttered, the more winningly it may insinuate itself into the heart.

“Advice, like snow,” says Coleridge, “the softer it falls, the longer it dwells upon and the deeper it sinks into the mind.” The “teacher of babes” should pre-eminently let his “doctrine drop as the rain,” and his “speech distill as the dew,” seeing that it has to alight “upon the tender herb.” Speak gently, then, fellow-teacher, speak gently.

“Speak gently, it is better far
To rule by love than fear ;
Speak gently, let no harsh words mar
The good we might do here.

Speak gently to the young, for they
Will have enough to bear ;
Pass through this life as best they may,
'Tis full of anxious care.



CHAPTER III.

IMPARTIALITY OF JUDGMENT.

EVENNESS of temper is not all that is required. A man may be uniform in his way of treating the several children in his class, while yet the treatment he invariably pursues toward one may without reason differ widely from the course which he as unfailingly adopts with a second. Personal favoritism should never be shown. On the contrary,

——“Justice most should guard
Where want of love might make the sentence hard.”

“Want of love,” indeed, in one sense, the teacher is not to be supposed capable of,—the love, namely, which springs from benevolence, and which yearns to raise the fallen, to bless the wretched, to succor the destitute, to reclaim the erring. The love of complacency, however, he cannot feel for all. There are the sprightly, the docile, the engaging, the good-looking, the affectionate ; and there are the morose, the untractable, the unprepossessing, the ill-featured, the cold-hearted. Constituted as we are, we naturally feel drawn

to the one, and repelled by the other. The evil lies neither in the fact itself, nor in our consciousness of it, but in our allowing it to influence our conduct. When we know that some outward circumstance about a child, or some moral characteristic in him, has prejudiced us strongly in his favor, we must be doubly cautious lest we act with partiality. When the current of feeling runs in the contrary direction, we must take care that we stem the tide. The children must be made to feel that if any difference is made between them, it is not the dictate of favoritism, but the award of even-handed justice ; that where any special allowance is made, it is in the case of those, and those only, who can lay a valid claim to the concession ; that all stand on an equal footing, and will in turn meet with the warranted indulgence, or undergo the deserved penalty. The sin of one may not be cloaked, while the shortcoming of another is exposed ; nor that good deed approved in one, which in another would have escaped notice.

Impartiality of conduct, however, must be based on impartiality of judgment. Our mode of dealing will be injudicious, if our estimate of character be at fault. The accessories as well as the motives of any action greatly alter its aspects ; and so also do the position and disposition of the agent. These things, therefore,

must always be taken into account. For instance :—

The same lesson may be repeated by Thomas and Robert in the same degree of perfection ; yet this by no means argues that an equal amount of exertion has been put forth by both. If rewards are given in the school—and this perhaps is one of the chief disadvantages of the system—the lesson-ticket, which is handed to each, is by no means an adequate representative of respective merit. The two are placed on a par, while, in reality, Robert, the dull but plodding scholar, is far more deserving than Thomas, the quick and clever boy, whose memory, like his eye, catches a thing at a single glance. Has the teacher no power to remedy the evil ? None so far as the ticket itself is concerned, for the laws of the school make no distinctions of the sort. But he may do something by his mode of giving it. Instead of doling out the rewards mechanically, he has a suitable word to qualify the act. The hard worker, to whom the getting up of the task must have been an effort, receives the stimulus of encouragement : his companion is told, “ Thomas, you also said your lesson well, but it didn’t cost you much, my boy ; see that you don’t forget it as fast as you learned it, for you know the proverb, ‘ Lightly come, lightly go.’ ” The two lads, if they have a spark of genuine unmerce-

nary feeling, will no longer affix to their tickets merely the idea of their marketable value, which is identical, but will really, though it may be almost unconsciously, regard them as the widely different exponents of so much labor in the one case, and only of so much result in the other. To have treated them precisely alike, would have been to treat them unfairly.

Never will our training of diversified temperaments be rightly conducted, till we have learned to discriminate. One child is retiring, and needs to be drawn out; another is forward, and requires to be checked.

Here are four that are alike silent and shy. In Susan, this arises from modesty, which would rather hear the voice of others than its own. In Sarah, from pride that is loath to expose itself to ridicule in case of making a blundering reply. In Ann, it springs from ignorance, that has no answer to give. And in Alice, from listlessness, that will not take the trouble to open its lips. The first you must tenderly encourage. To the second you must give, no, not a moment's quarter. The third you must instruct; and the fourth, rouse.

It will be sad work if you misunderstand the case, and apply the spur where you ought to draw the rein. There was one teacher, and but one, who "knew what is in man." His omniscience

you cannot attain; yet on you it devolves to acquire all the insight which patient observation can give. Never must you regard your judgment as if it were infallible; never, because it will be but fallible, must you refrain from having one. Form the best you can, and then make it your guide, while still you watch to see if aught arises to alter and amend it. Meanwhile, be candid in your opinion. Be ready to descry the "silver thread" even "in the black serge-cloth," and despair not of some gleams of good still lingering in the darkest. Yet be not over-ready to exult in hopeful appearances. Remember that there is such a thing as the "morning cloud."

Form a right estimate of children's words as well as of their dispositions and actions. Recollect that the young are quick-witted in discovering what will please, and apt at catching up phrases which they think will win approval. Beware lest you encourage hypocrisy, by regarding as genuine what is but a feint, or by admiring as their own what is but borrowed plumage. As in the family, so in the Sunday-school class, there is a danger of mistaking what is only second-hand for that which is original. Seek to gain a practiced eye in detecting the difference. Note whether what is said is characterized by a child-spirit, as well as clothed in child's phrase. Consider whether the saying is one that bears

any proportion to the mental capacity and mental furniture of the speaker. Never let him think that he can pass off, as the result of his own pondering, what is really no more than the echo of a friend's prompting. He should be freely allowed to consult father or mother, sister or companion ; for he may thereby confer as well as gain a benefit, and may widen the circle of your influence by setting other minds to work at the question you proposed : but he must be required to give in the answer as a suggested, and not a self-discovered one. Should a child bring you such a reply as you deem unlikely to have been spontaneously elicited by any exertion of his own brain, ask what made him think so or how came he to find it out. Should it be apparent, from his lack of power to give the faintest clue to any thing like a process of thought, that his own mind has not been in exercise, then ask where he read it, or who told it him. Make him feel that there is no disgrace in learning what is right and good from any one and every one ; but that there is crime in pretending to advance as our own what we are only repeating from the lips or the pens of our neighbors. Even childhood may be guilty of its conscious plagiarisms ; and where intellectual dishonesty of this sort is undetected in the school-room, it

may lay a foundation, broad and strong, for monetary delinquencies in after life.

The administering of praise is a thing which requires a discerning cautiousness. We must bear in mind, that there are differently-constituted minds, on which praise acts with a totally diverse effect. To one, it is a deadly poison ; to another, a lulling narcotic ; and to a third, a healthful cordial. The first accepts it with avidity, but the more eagerly he imbibes it, he covets it in yet larger abundance, and lays himself out to secure its increase, till all nobleness of motive dies out of him, artificiality becomes the element of his being, and his every word and deed are put forth as baits, in the hope of bringing home to him the "sweet" but fatal "morsel" that he loves to "roll under his tongue." In the second case, the laudatory word becomes the source of inward satisfaction ; self-flattery cherishes the idea of having "already attained ;" and the ambition to achieve an onward progress is utterly dormant in the soul. But there is yet a third, a timid child, conscious of weakness, and appalled by difficulty, one whom looks and syllables of commendation will brace to lustier enterprise and to healthier hopes, one who will look upon expressions of praise as incentives granted rather than merited rewards, as symbols of consecration to the stadium rather

than as garlands of triumph twined around the victor's brow. So long as one such may be found here and there among our classes, it would be unsafe to advise that eulogy should always be withheld. Rather let us see that it be well-timed, well-directed, and well-worded.

"Approbation," so we are told in the *Guesses at Truth*, "speaks of the thing or action; *that* is right; *what you have done* is right. Praise is always personal; *you* are right; *you* are a good child." Whatever the force of this as a synonym, it is useful as a suggestion. Adopt the latter mode of passing an encomium, and you make your appeal direct to the child's self-consciousness; make the former your model, and you are doing what in you lies to draw attention more to the excellency of duty than to any praiseworthiness in the doer of it. Let down the blind, by all means, where the beams of heaven would fall too fiercely on some floweret that needs the shade; but darken not all the windows, lest another should decay, as Tupper says,—

"Like a plant in a crowded corner, for want of
sunshine on its leaves."

Forget not, moreover, that your object is to train children for what they may possibly meet with in after life. Among other things, therefore, you should teach them *how* to bear commenda-

tion, when it is accorded to them. And this may be taught, not by withholding it, but by judiciously accustoming them to its voice, and occasionally reminding them that there is a praise higher far than that of men, and safer too, but which will be vouchsafed to none, who, seeking and finding their renown from men alone, "have their reward" here, but are unable to testify that their "record is on high."

Finally, no partial judgment must be made as to the good which children are likely to receive in the school. The ease with which some imbibe instruction, the docility with which they yield to the guiding hand, the promptness with which they act upon a hint or comply with a request, the unrebliousness with which they submit to reproof and correction, lead to the idea that it is in these hearts the great work is most prospering. Yet it is often far otherwise. "Ye canna price the green barley," is a proverb that warns us against pre-judgment as to a character that is still immature. Seeming amiability may be motivated by an indolence that merely aims to keep things smooth. Non-resistance may be the cloak of passive indifference. That which looks like patient submission may be the evidence of sheer unimpressibility. In reference to "the compliant character, who assents to all that you say, and is whatever you choose to call him," it

has been well said by a writer on the duties pertaining to the clerical office, "Little good can be done with such an one ; he does not indeed wear a defense of steel and brass against your attacks ; but the soft-quilted jerkin is known to spend the force of a bullet against which steel and brass were not proof." Let a teacher mark the course of his pupils after they have passed from under his influence, and he will be surprised to find how often those who gave him the least trouble eventually turn out the worst. The evils that were in them lay carefully concealed ; and a foe that was unsuspected, the teacher left unattacked. On the other hand, he has found oftentimes that the harder his labor, the larger has been his final success. The very qualities which make children troublesome to us now, may be "the sparks of nobler fires," which we need not—which we dare not—quench. What now wears the form of willful obstinacy may hereafter be modulated into decision of character. What now annoys us as untameable restlessness, may hereafter develop itself into an energy that shall know no weariness. "Judge nothing before the time."

CHAPTER IV.

SELF-DENYING ZEAL.

THE open pathway that winds through verdant pastures to the hill-top, may look inviting as glanced at from afar, and may have its charms as we first try the ascent; but despite the flowerets that spring at our feet, and the widening landscape that greets us with its smile as we reach a higher elevation, we may at times find our road steep and wearying, tedious and toilsome, exposed to the fierce heat of the noon-day sun, or unsheltered from the sudden thunder-shower's violence. The work of the Sunday-school teacher, in like manner, has its attractions, both prospective and actual, while yet its hardships are no less real and varied.

The pleasures,—what are they? Let those ask who have no sympathy with a child's young heart, who have never gazed into a child's glad eye—never won a child's confiding smile—never bent a willing ear to the strange utterance of a child's small difficulties—never witnessed the gradual dawn of a child's reasoning faculties—never tested the elastic power of youthful

memory, or the quick vibration with which each chord of infant emotion will answer to the touch. To study childhood aright may well be the occupation of a life, and is an employment of untold and unending interest. To watch from week to week the changeful aspects of the youthful mind, is not to contemplate the fixed motions of an orrery, each separate portion revolving on axis or in orbit by due measure and with proportionate velocity; but it is to mark with ever new wonder the fresh and varying combinations of some vast kaleidoscope. Each turn of life, each change of incident, produces an altered state of thought and feeling. In a measure, it is so with us all. No providence, no ordinance, leaves us as it found us. But, in the adult, the impress of extraneous things is not so clearly defined. In him the attrition of active life has worn away the finer edges of the soul's surface. The impressibility of childhood, on the contrary, renders it an age of peculiar sensitiveness to every outward influence. No violent effort, no forceful pressure, is requisite to shape the plastic wax.

This analogy, however, suggests another and a less grateful thought. There are bad moulds as well as good, foul stamps as well as fair; and the impression of the former is received as easily as that of the latter, nay, far more so. The heart, which ought to be a precious coin to bear

“the image and superscription” of the heavenly King, is often a worthless token inscribed with the devices or maxims of the evil one. Hence the pain that mingles with our pleasure, as we scan the attributes of the infant-soul. “Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right;” and it is not seldom that the teacher has to exclaim, “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.” It is no “blank page” that we have to read, but a series of pages, each replete with crowding thoughts, yet marred by omissions, errors, stains. In the untutored children of the unlettered poor, it very often happens that through lack of culture, discipline, and shelter, there are grievous manifestations of early vice. No check is placed on the evil propensities that reign with undisputed sway. And mournful as all evidence of depravity must be, in none is the heart made more sad to witness it than in the juvenile delinquent. Emphatically marked is the contrast, when, in what are called the tender years of life, we see proofs of the untender heart, and during the spring-time of the body an icy winter of the soul. So humiliating and so painful is the sight, that if duty did not call, we should be glad to turn away our eyes from the revolting spectacle. But it is not for the followers of the Great Physician, it is not for those who work

under his orders, to withdraw their feet from the lazar-house, whatever its aspect of misery. The deeper the wretchedness, the greater the call for charity's outstretched hand. A remedy is provided for the dying, and whatever it may cost us of a struggle with self, we must do our utmost to secure its reception.

There are for the teacher other hardships than those arising from the waywardness or wickedness of his charge. Some there are, which, although far less in importance, may make themselves even more actually felt. The office is found to be no sinecure. In some respects, certainly, it makes less call for self-denial, now, than once it did. The Sunday-school teacher of our day has seldom to encounter much of opposition or scorn. He is not called so often as in bygone years to teach in the close atmosphere of an ill-ventilated school-room. He has not necessarily to patch up old, tattered spelling-books, and fragmentary portions of worn-out Testaments or Bibles. His materials are ready and abundant, his welfare is heeded, his every reasonable want supplied. Few now are the districts so destitute, or the schools so poorly supported, that they who labor have to do so at their own expense, and to their sore discomfort. But none may think that he who enters on the work, even under all these advantages, will have

nothing to endure. Let him try, and he will discover it to be otherwise. He must not be a feather-bed soldier, nor may he deem his a mere summer campaign. He will have to rouse himself from his slumbers in the morning. He will have to take, oftentimes, a hurried meal. He will have to face the weather, however inclement. He will have to fight against all physical, if not also at times against mental disinclination to his task. The bodily rest will have to be foregone, which is the gracious sabbath privilege allowed for the Christian's personal refreshment; and to others must be devoted many an hour which he could find it in his heart gladly to spend in private communion with God. When any of these considerations weigh heavily on the mind of the toil-worn laborer, nothing can revive his drooping energies, save the sustaining grace of God from without, and the impelling principle of a heaven-kindled zeal within. He must be able to say, "The zeal of thine house—of thy church—of thy cause—hath eaten me up." He must be one who studies not to please himself. He must learn to say, with his Master, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of; I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day. Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? Father, glorify thy name." His motto must be, "Not to be

ministered unto, but to minister ;” his rule, “ Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth ;” his principle of action, “ Not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.”

A distinction must here be made. While “ it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing,” care must be taken to avoid a zeal which is “ not according to knowledge.” A self-denying zeal differs widely from a self-willed zeal ; and yet by many the two are confounded. Moral philosophers have done wisely to put us on our guard against imagining that to be self-sacrifice, which is, in point of fact, only the sacrifice of one part of our nature for the gratification of another. To some it is an act of less difficulty to encounter fatigue or do battle with the elements, than to yield to friendly monitions, accept providential restraints, and, for health’s sake, retire temporarily or permanently from the scene of active exertion. It is not in every case, it is not, perhaps, in the majority of cases, that we may look upon our friends as tempters, or dare to think, if we do not venture to say, of them, “ Get thee behind me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” Satan, it is true, may at times whisper, “ Spare thyself ;” but there are other occasions on which he gives the opposite advice,

and leads the feeble, by over-working themselves, to shorten the term of their usefulness. "Man," we know, "is immortal till his work is done;" but this assurance must not act as the spell of fatalism. There are means at our disposal; and for their use toward the prolongation of our life, we are responsible. It may be a perplexing thing to decide whether it is God who thus bids us retreat, or whether he is only suffering our zeal to be tested. But when brought into such a strait, let us lay aside the private inclinations that would sway us either to the one course or the other; and looking for guidance unreservedly to the God we serve, he will make our way plain before us, by showing us when to labor and when to forbear. Implicitly obeying him, we shall find that we are led by a right path. When he conducts us into the solitude, he will there speak comfortably to us, and give us the Valley of Achor for a door of hope. Or if he sends us out to bear the heat and burden of the day, he will either enable us to feel it unworthy the name of a sacrifice, or he will cheer us with the happy assurance that what we lose for his sake, he will more than repay. If he allows many a Hill Difficulty to obstruct our progress, he can make our "feet like hinds' feet," to scale the high places with fleet unwearied steps.

CHAPTER V.

STEADFAST PERSEVERANCE.

ALTHOUGH, as we have just seen, there may be circumstances which justify, and even demand a teacher's resignation, it must never be imagined that the Sunday-school work is a thing to be taken up at the impulse of a moment, and laid down again at the dictate of a capricious fancy. It demands of a man every effort he can make, and every moment he can spare. It knows how to put into requisition the fiery ardor of youth, the staid energy of manhood, the deep experience of age. Such as enter its ranks should look on that step as the definitive choice of what deserves to be a life-long vocation. If they ever have to retire, it should be the result of the after events which may have transpired, and not the realizing of a fore-calculation which meant to pledge itself only for a brief career. It is one thing to find that we are providentially hindered from prosecuting a good design, and quite another thing to have set about the work with a vague idea or an express intention of sometime, if not speedily, relinquishing the toil.

Yet there are not a few who have started on the course without the remotest idea of ever looking back, or halting, or turning aside, to whom, nevertheless, it may be said, "Ye did run well; who, or what hath hindered you?" The question demands reply, as it may serve to warn those, who are newly pledged to the enterprise, against the inconsistency to which they, like others, may become a prey.

1. There is one, perhaps, who has been tempted by *indolence* to ungird his armor. He heard the summoning of the hosts, he followed at the voice of command, he exulted in the glitter and pomp of the review, he bestirred himself to keep pace with his comrades in the march, he evinced somewhat of prowess in the field, he had a share in the joys of victory. But here a check was interposed. The charm of novelty no longer allured him. His native slothfulness regained the day. It took its revenge for the constraint whereby it had been forced into unaccustomed action, and built its plea for indulgence on that success which ought to have inspired an increased ardor for the war. It has been with him as it was with the tribes of Israel, who, content with the settlements they had won, rested in a total or at least seeming oblivion of the fact that there remained "yet very much land to be possessed." Let teachers remember that "it is not one battle

which decides the fortune of the war." We shall sadly miscalculate, if, in judging of the past, we contemplate the measure of success granted us, and fail to cast up the opposite column which tells of what remains undone. One heart may have been renewed; what is that to the "ninety and nine" that are still under the power of sin? Over one soul saved we may rejoice, but we must look on it as the pledge and precursor of the "greater things" that may await redoubled diligence.

2. But it is not always that success thus attends our earliest efforts. More frequently we are conversant with failure. Hence *discouragement* is one of the most common causes for a teacher's resignation of his post. But is this an adequate cause? Let us look at it in every light, and still we shall have to reply, Surely not. If no blame lies at our own door—if the blessing be withheld, and we fail to discern the reason of its denial—even this furnishes us with no excuse for abandoning the enterprise. We are not mercenaries, working for hire; we have an important interest deeply at heart, and our very earnestness, therefore, should be a bar to that impatience which would relax its efforts because the result is not yet secured. "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged," was the prophecy concerning the divine Teacher of Nazareth; yet he

often had to say, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught." And though we may have been out "all the night, and have taken nothing," yet, when the Master's voice bids us "launch into the deep," it is our duty, instead of putting vain, sinful questions as to the providential dispensations of "the night of toil," obediently and individually to say, "Nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net."

Often, however, our want of prosperity may be directly traceable to ourselves. Our own faults or follies, incompetency or inexperience, lukewarmness or prayerlessness, may have laid the basis of our disappointment. We reap, not the harvest we had fondly hoped, but that which corresponds to our sowing. We have not invested our talent profitably, and we cannot expect a satisfactory return. Yet it does not behoove us to resign our trust, but to inquire how in time coming we may prove better stewards. In our Sunday-school adversities, as well as our personal afflictions, "it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: that which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more." When we have found out wherefore God contends with us, we should the more resolutely, as we can the more easily, set ourselves in his strength to remedy the existing evil.

Another thing which is apt to dispirit us, is the difficulty of the task. Our souls are "discouraged because of the way." We often realize the statement made by the late Mr. Griffin, when he said,—“Our work is not like that of the painter or sculptor : when the painter lays down his pencil, or the sculptor his chisel, and afterwards returns to his canvas or his marble, he finds his work just as forward as he left it. But our addresses are like writing on the sands at an ebb-tide ; when we come to continue and finish the writing which we had begun, we find that the tide of worldly feeling and sinful passion has obliterated former impressions, and we have to go over the work again.” The memory of childhood is indeed tenacious, but its thoughts are volatile. It has the power to grasp a truth retentively ; but it often flings aside the purely lustrous pearl, when attracted by the gayer sheen of some bright-winged fly that disports itself in the summer air.

In addition to this, there are influences at work which run directly counter to our own. There “cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown” in the heart. Or it may be that what we do at school is undone at home, by the example, and teachings, and the conversation, of vicious parents. Our labor is that of the net-mender ; little by little, stitch by

stitch, mesh by mesh ; and even then it may be that at the next trial the fabric gives way, through native weakness or violent injury, and the restorative process must commence anew.

It can be no matter of surprise, that the patience of some should fail. "Become school-master," said Dr. Grynæus to Thomas Platter ; "there is no more heavenly office ; there is nothing I would rather be, *if only I never needed to say a thing twice over.*" Such is the language of nature. But sober-speaking reason, especially when sanctified by grace, can teach us to adopt a loftier tone. A Christian mother was known to affirm that she was never weary of repeating a thing, though it were *twenty* times over, if so in the end she could fix it in her child's mind. It is by dint of perseverance like hers that we must attain our aim. Patience must have its perfect work. Instead of turning aside, appalled at the obstacles which stand in our path, let us learn so to plant our foot upon them, that we may transmute what might have been stumbling-blocks into stepping-stones that shall facilitate our progress.

But again ; there are some in whom despondency is the natural resilience of the mind after the tension of an excessive hope. They may have looked either for results too large, or for a return too speedy. They may have entertained

exaggerated notions as to the *amount* of what they might expect. They may have forgotten that while a child's piety is one in principle, it is not one in its development with the piety of a man in the full maturity of his days. They may have failed to see, as Stirling has beautifully expressed it, that "the iris in the dew-drop is just as true and perfect an iris as the bow that measures the heavens." Missing the full-sized portrait they had looked for, they have forgotten that the photographic miniature sufficed to present, though on a smaller scale, the same general contour and the same proportionate details. Noticing that the expression was juvenile, they have gone their way without observing that the family-likeness was stamped on every feature of the infant-face.

Or it may be that they have been over-sanguine as to the *immediateness* of the result. Although it is our duty both to strive and pray for a present blessing, we must not impatiently conclude that our striving and our praying have been thrown away, because we see not the effect of the one and the answer to the other. There may be a process steadily going on underground, long ere the germ pushes its shoot above the surface. The root may be striking deep, while as yet no bud of promise meets the eye. And even where the seed has not quickened, yet there

it is, and there it may perhaps continue to lie, undislodged, unchoked, uninjured, till the fructifying influence of God's grace shall descend, and cause to it bring forth fruit abundantly. Many a time, in the season of soul-conviction, the remembrance of lessons long since learned, has suddenly risen up from one of memory's hidden recesses, and in the new light of a new emotion has stood clearly forth, more legible than when first engraven on the soul. "As soon as I saw myself a sinner," said a scholar to a friend of ours, I had no need to despair; for you had taught me where to find a Saviour. It was long before I would turn; but when I was made to wish it, I knew at once where to turn."

Neither as to the extent nor as to the expeditiousness of our success, should we cherish unjustifiable anticipations. We wish men to "hear," but we know full well that some will "forbear." Our ambition must be kept so far in check that our expectations shall always be below our aims. Any other course would entail inevitable disappointment.

3. *Distraction* of mind is inimical to steadfast perseverance. This may arise from an increase of domestic engagements. Home-duties are necessarily first in importance. We must not say a word to invalidate such a claim. The only question is whether the utmost is done to

reconcile the two, and make both compatible. We believe that in many cases this may be effected. It is a bad sign, when a teacher is found excusing himself from his work on the plea, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." If he had sought and found a "help-meet" for him, she would surely be willing to make some sacrifice of his society for the sake of such a cause. The old Israelitish law of a twelvemonth's exemption is no parallel, and cannot honestly be pleaded as a sanction for relinquishment of the work. One hint, however, in passing. It is no wonder that a wife expects her husband to forego his work after marriage, if she has found him eager to absent himself from it during the days of his courtship. Let the evil be checked, where thus it too frequently begins. With reference to our female teachers, it is hardly to be expected that when they become involved in the new duties of wedded life, they should be found at their class as heretofore. We rejoice over those who are able and willing to prosecute their labors; we sympathize not with those who have been known to decline the services of an experienced Christian on the plea, "We never employ married ladies to teach in our school!" But if any of our sisters find it necessary to refrain from giving us their further

aid, we are not prepared uncharitably to denounce it as a sign of decaying zeal.

Distraction may sometimes be caused by the over-multiplicity of religious efforts. There are not a few who are ready to run hither and thither in furtherance of any new scheme, but who cannot steadily hold on "the even tenor of their way," in any one given direction. It is not a spirit thus addicted to roving, which accomplishes the most good. Men who can say, "This one thing I do," have always been the most efficient workers, whether in things temporal or spiritual. What is gained in diffusiveness, is often less than what would be attained by condensation. One plan, strenuously carried out, will be more telling than half a dozen, which divide the energies, and waste the strength. Thus Carlyle, in his work on Schiller :—

"The weakest living creature, by concentrating his powers on a single object, can accomplish something ; the strongest, by dispersing his over many, may fail to accomplish any thing. The drop, by continual falling, bores its passage through the hardest rock ; the hasty torrent rushes over it with hideous uproar, and leaves no trace behind."

So also the Chinese aphorists :—

"A caldron of water, after fire has been long applied, will at last boil ; but if, in the mean-

while, you change the water, and put on fresh, though a great deal of water will be partially heated, none will be made boiling hot. Get rid, therefore, of all extraneous thoughts, and keep to the matter in hand. Better a little and fine than much and coarse."

To these suggestions, however, common practice seems to stand opposed in matters of religious enterprise. It is repeatedly said, that those who *are* doing most *can* do most; and it would appear to be on this principle that we so frequently see one and the same individual combining the onerous duties of Sunday-school teacher, District visitor, Tract distributor, and Bible collector, as well as secretary, treasurer, or committee-man in a host of benevolent societies. In some exceptional cases, this may be admissible; but in far more numerous instances, a division of labor would more conduce to the well-being of each separate institution, as well as of each several worker. Striving to do too much, we may fail to do any one thing well. Undertaking duties for which we are unfit, we may have our attention drawn off from the field of action for which we have a special aptitude. It is true, that with a world perishing around us, we cannot do too much, nor work too variously, for the rescue of dying souls. Yet a well-regulated zeal will not be unmindful that he who would secure the

widest usefulness, may be more likely to attain it by the thorough-going and steadfast, single-heartedness which ordinarily works within a fixed limit, than by following the vague and ruleless impulse which hurries him from occupation to occupation at the risk of unfaithfulness or of unpersistence. If the teacher works continuously as well as carefully, he may be enabled to send forth a large array of workers, to show their diligence in the separate departments for which they may be most suited. But let him be taken off his duties at the school to lend his aid to other causes, and he may perhaps have to exclaim of those entrusted to his care, "Thy servant was busy here and there, and lo! this one and that one were missing."

4. The approach of *age* causes some to appear more or less weary in well doing. This may certainly be looked on as one of the most valid reasons a teacher can assign for his abdication of office. When advancing years bring with them a weight of felt infirmity, there is full excuse for retiring from a post so responsible and so arduous. Joshua, when his strength was weakened by the way, was not called to lead the hosts to fresh engagements; "the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years . . . now therefore divide this land for an inheritance." He who knoweth our frame, will require of us

no service beyond that which we have strength to render. The teacher, whose hoary head is a crown of glory, but who feels the grasshopper to be a burden, may be doing what is not only allowable but advisable, when he resigns his place to a younger than himself. If his infirmities are manifest, whether physically or mentally—if his articulation has become impaired, or his mind enfeebled—if his vivacity has died away, or his memory decayed—it would be unwise in him to retain the charge. A teacher who is past service, and yet has not the good sense to make a timely retreat, would be even more out of place than the minister who continues to fill the pulpit after he has long outlived his usefulness.

But such, possibly, may not be your case, young teacher, should you live to be “full of days.” Caleb could say, when he was fourscore years and five, “As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; as my strength was then, even so is my strength now for war, both to go out and to come in.” Such experienced and able veterans are needed in the service. A few we have known, whose hearts were so earnest and devoted, whose spirits were so genial and buoyant, whose looks were so bright and sunny, that to the last week of a long life’s decline they have proved themselves

teachers, alike loving and beloved. Years have but ripened their judgment, matured their intellect, and mellowed their cheerfulness. With constant feet they have trod the wonted path to their class-room, or with unabated zeal they have summoned their scholars, week after week, around the couch of feebleness,—testifying, in the one case, by wondrous vigor, and in the other, by a no less wondrous calmness of soul, that the Christian can “still bring forth fruit in old age, to show that the Lord is upright.” Be it ours to emulate such perseverance; ours to say, as did an old divine, “I had rather wear out than rust out, and die in the harness than die in the stall;” ours to offer at last the Psalmist’s prayer, “Now also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not, until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.”

PART III.

THE TEACHER'S ACTUAL LABORS.

THE jurist of long standing and experience is looked on as a safer guide in legal difficulties than the novice who has come fresh from the study of Blackstone. The latter may be well versed in the literature of the profession, but he has neither tested the capacities of law, nor his own capability of turning them to account. The untried teacher may fancy himself possessed of the needful qualifications for his office; but it is in actual service alone that his fitness or unfitness becomes manifest to himself and others.

The duties in which we have to "make full proof" of our work, may be ranked under three divisions; some preparatory, some regular, and others supplemental. It is highly important that we should have correct views of each of these; and they therefore will be considered at some length.

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATION BEFORE SCHOOL.

THE artificer who would skillfully execute his task must give a heedful eye to it, before he drives in the first stroke. He must ponder how the result can be secured with least expenditure of time and strength and material. He must forecast his plan, foresee every probable advantage, forearm himself against every possible impediment. Not less so the teacher of the young. There must be careful study on his part,—study of the truth itself—study of the young hearts to whom it is to be communicated—study of the best means whereby that truth can in those minds be lodged. He will prove but a bungler at his work, if he rushes to it without preparation. He may be “apt to teach;” but what of that, if he has nothing definite to impart? He may be gentle in spirit; but what avails it, if knowledge enters not the unclosed portal? He may be self-denying and persevering in his zeal, but if there be nothing beyond this, there will only be “clouds and wind without rain.”

A general preparation for our work consists

in the use of all those means by which our earnestness may be quickened, and our appetite enhanced. The teacher should examine any book that falls in his, or her way, in reference to ministerial responsibility; his or *her*, we expressly say, because without such specification our female teachers might regard the suggestion as inapplicable to themselves. And further, let no opportunity be neglected of reading works which treat of the parental office; since what the father and mother should do in the training of a family, that to a certain extent the teacher should do in the training of a class. Scarcely needful is it to add, that works intentionally adapted to the teacher's use, should be his frequent study. The Manuals for teachers, particularly, have a claim on his regular and careful attention.

But more specific preparation than this will be required; and it must be made a weekly duty. None ought to think lightly of the pondering which each Sunday's lesson calls for at our hands. Where a teacher comes unprepared, and relying only on the resources of his past education, his lack of readiness is sure to tell upon his class. Fluent he may be in his words, but there is something unordered in his thought and speech. If he keeps to the text by way of guide, he cleaves to it with formality; if he launches

out into any theme that chances to present itself, he bewilders his scholars with the randomness of his remarks. If he depicts a Bible-narrative, he does it with the vagueness of one who has some confused remembrance of geographic or oriental lore, once familiar to the mind, but half-forgotten now. If he wishes to enforce the teachings of a passage, he brings forward one maxim after another in desultory style, but furnishes no abiding idea of the actual design the sacred writer had in view. A man may, under such circumstances, teach and perchance teach much, but *not well*.

No appeal may be made to our Saviour's words, "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour." Christ's precept was spoken to apostles, and His promise had respect to the time when they, being brought before kings and governors, must give in their answer according to the charge which *in that hour* might happen to be laid against them. To Timothy was given far other advice, when he was directed to "study" or "give diligence" with a view to the right discharge of his pastoral functions. It is the evangelist, and not the apostle, that must supply us with a model.

PREPARATORY THOUGHT.—The teacher is, in one important respect, on a different footing from the

minister. Engrossed, as he generally is, in the avocations of daily business, he can redeem for study only the scraps and intervals of his time. A day of preparation would be to him a boon ; it is only an hour or so, now and then, that he has power to reserve. There is a way, however, whereby he may in part remedy the evil. Let him not trust only to the set hours of preparatory work ; but let him keep his subject ever in his mind. Let him look beforehand, and note what themes will come under review the next two or three Sabbaths. Let him revolve these topics in his mind as he paces along the street. Let him be on the lookout from day to day for incidents that may be turned to profitable use. Let his casual reading be made subservient to the same end. An "I heard" or "I saw" will often attract the attention, which would fail to be aroused even by a "There was once." An "I read this week," or "last week" is more forcible than an "I remember reading a year or two ago." Let the teacher recall what he read in his childhood, and he awakens the vein of sympathy ; let him tell what he has been perusing recently, and it has all the charm of actuality ; but let him deal in dateless stories, and his narratives lose much of their point. Children, be it remembered, are usually interested in what their teacher has seen or felt. True, indeed, this is a bow

which may be overstrained. Beware, therefore, of egotism. Do not play on the same string too often. Use the first person singular somewhat sparingly. Yet do not ignore its use ; for, when well-employed, it is a mighty auxiliary. Borrow not only from your personal experience or adventures, but draw occasionally from the fountain of public occurrences. Keep an eye fixed on all that transpires, and an ear open to all that is talked about. Do not advert to such matters in class, if they are wholly incongruous to the lesson before you ; but do not shrink from referring to them, where they suitably illustrate your theme. Should you meet with any thing that you deem interesting and important, but of which you can make no immediate use, do not let it escape. Treasure it up. Make a note of it. Lay it carefully aside till the moment when it is needed. Be on the lookout at all times and in all places. Thus in the example ensuing :

M. M. is walking in a corn-field ; is struck with something peculiar in the aspect of the grain ; on closer inspection, perceives it to be of a foreign species ; inquires of a laborer, who tells him it is Egyptian corn, and unlikely to be much grown here, because, though prolific, it is coarse. He counts the ears, finds seven on each stalk, asks leave to have a specimen, carries it home, and lays it on the shelf which forms his

miniature museum. There it lies for months, when the subject, *Joseph in prison*, supplies an opportunity of giving his class this ocular demonstration as to the truth of the Scripture narrative. On the Sabbath week following, when the same subject is continued, he lends his corn-stalk to a fellow-teacher; and on another Sunday he lends it to yet another, who can use it in explaining how the good seed in good ground could yield an hundred fold.

The ideas which children acquire from actual objects are much clearer than those which even the best engraving can furnish. Show them the picture of a Jewish parchment-roll, and they look with wonder; but take them a real or even a model one—show them how it is unrolled when one would open it, and rolled up again when one would shut it—tell them it was so that Christ unrolled the book, and so that he closed it, in the synagogue at Nazareth—point out to them how it can have writing “both within and on the back side,” like Ezekiel’s roll, or the mystic book in the Revelation—and the look of the little gazers becomes one of vivid and intelligent interest. Where no tangible object or model can be shown, a picture may at times be of service; but it would be better, except in an infant-class, to restrict this entirely to the representations of those objects which verbal descriptions

can hardly suffice to portray; such as, the ark of the covenant, the high-priest's mitre, the altar with its horns, &c. The exhibition, whether of objects, models, or prints, should be only such as exigency warrants. It will, therefore, not be an invariable, hardly a frequent thing. Far less will any succession of objects be allowed in one lesson, else the main design will be sacrificed for that which should be merely incidental. The Sunday is not a time, nor the school a place, for any thing of sight-seeing. It is only when a casual appeal to the eye may save the teacher a long round of descriptive phrases, and do the work more effectively as well as more summarily, that such a thing is admissible. Chosen with a serious intent, fitted to the subject with unquestionable nicety, and employed only to rivet useful associations more firmly in the memory, a visible or pictorial illustration may be made and may be felt to be a solid medium of sound instruction. Only when it is idly resorted to, and lightly displayed, does it come to be regarded as a device for whiling away the time, or giving relish to what would else be dry.

It is in these and similar ways that a teacher can give himself wholly to his work, by an endeavor to convert his thinking and feeling, his reading and learning, his seeing and hearing, into so many tributary streams that shall feed

the broad deep channel in which his heart's affections flow forth to his young pupils. His "profiting" will appear in all his varied plans, if over each he meditates and prays. The successful is the thoughtful teacher.

PREPARATORY WORK.—The appointed hour has come—the first leisure of the week. The teacher retires to his wonted room or his accustomed corner, and places his books around him. First and foremost is his Bible. Perhaps he has more than one. A reference Bible is indispensable ; a paragraph Bible is not without its uses ; and so much the better, if one of these has been converted into an interleaved Bible for the insertion of valuable critical notices, whensoever or wheresoever found. Next to the Bible or Bibles, will come a Concordance. With no further material than these, a teacher could do much in examining his subject. To compare one part of Scripture with another is of paramount importance in the interpretation of the sacred oracles. In revelation, as in providence,

"God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

Human aid, however, if procurable, may be gratefully welcomed. A commentary or commentaries are produced, Ripley's Notes, perhaps the Comprehensive Commentary, or any other

that may be in the student's possession. An atlas will come next, and if a Biblical Cyclo-pædia be within reach, it will not be forgotten. The manuscript commonplace-book, also, with index, will find its nook amid the group of authorities.

1. Not without an uplifted prayer for the Holy Spirit's enlightening influences will the work commence. The next preliminary will be a continuous reading of the entire passage, covered by the lesson for the day in the question book. On this part of a teacher's preparation, it is desirable to lay great stress. It has been urged, as a rule for composition, that an author should take care to observe something like what in artistic productions gives the effect known as "aërial perspective," due regard being had, in the proportionate grouping and the softened tints, to the several gradations of distance, middle, and foreground. The teacher may take the same hint in the arrangement of his lessons. He must first determine what is to stand out in prominent relief; every detail which serves to give it boldness, must be traced in with spirit; all that bears on it less forcibly, must be kept further from view; and what has little or no necessary connection with it, must be touched with so light a hand, that while it shall contribute to the

general effect, it shall not avail to draw off the attention from the one leading idea. It will be of greater advantage that the class should carry away a single truth, imprinted on their memories for life, than a whole list of valuable thoughts, not one of which survives the morning's dawn.

If we have the choice of our own subjects, the lesson we are intending to educe will in some cases *regulate*, and in others *be regulated by* the length or the shortness of the passage we select. The teacher who regularly spends a whole lesson on one verse, and his neighbor who always makes the class read chapter after chapter with only a single remark ejaculated here and there, are alike unskillful. The judicious teacher either adjusts the reading-portion to the use he intends to make of it; or else, adopting the book of lessons used in the school, makes his remarks fuller on this verse, or that, according to the light it throws on the principal theme. An example may here be needed, to develop the difference of mode in arranging a subject. If the teacher is going through a series of lessons on the New Testament narratives of conversion, he will in due turn come to Acts ii., and in treating it, he would probably proceed in some such way as this:—

The *time* of conversion; a solemn feast, when

multitudes were present; the feast of harvest, which well tokened the gospel-reaping. The *subjects* of the change; most of them devout in their way, but pharisaic and bigoted Jews. The *miracles* that preceded it; the rushing sound; the luminous appearance; the gift of tongues. The *means* employed; first, the faithful preaching of the truth—truth about the Messiah, that he had come—truth about the hearers, that they had rejected him; and, secondly, the effectual influence of God's Spirit, convincing them of sin and leading them to inquiry. The *evidences* of conversion—faith, love, devotion, joy, consistency, and usefulness. Application: Have you these fruits of the Spirit? &c.

The history of Cornelius, in chap. x., would occupy a second and separate afternoon. The platform would be the same; the building up, different.

The *time*; not a public feast, but a social gathering at the hour of prayer. The *subjects*, not men prejudiced against the truth, but inquirers taking all means to attain it. The *miraculous visions* that paved the way; that of Cornelius, inclining him to send; that of Peter, inciting him to obey the summons. The *means*; the preacher and his journey; the congregation, and their readiness to hear; the sermon, short but suitable; the outpouring of the Spirit in

gifts and graces. The *evidences*; three, the same as before; the three radical ones—faith, love, joy. Application: If you would have the fruits of the Spirit, do as Cornelius did; pray to God; listen to his word; believe in his Son.

In the getting up of these two lessons, it is evident that there should be an aim to bring out the main points of the history with graphic accuracy, dwelling minutely on the experience and Christian character of the converts, while giving only a sketch-like view of the apostolic discourses.

Suppose, on the other hand, that, with a more advanced class, a teacher has taken up the life of the Apostle Peter, and is wishing to give a lesson on the fact of his having had to open the door of the gospel-kingdom both to Jew and Gentile. If the learners are already familiar with the outline of the two narratives, it might be interesting and profitable to take both the above-named chapters on the same afternoon, and combine them in one view. Of this, as a more difficult lesson, we must give more fuller notes:—

Acts ii. Rapid questioning on the incidents.—Look at Peter, the central figure in the group, as he begins to address the crowd. How changed since his late timorous denial; the very name of “Jesus of Nazareth,” which then terrified him

into oaths, is now the burden of his discourse.—Analyze the sermon. The first eight verses are introductory ; he defends himself and his companions from a false charge—that defense twofold, Jewish custom and Jewish prophecy. The sermon itself begins where the quotation from Joel ends. It consists of four points :—I. The *life* of Jesus, with its many and well-known miracles. II. The *death* of Jesus—a sinful thing on man's part ; a wisely-permitted thing on God's part. III. The *resurrection* of Jesus—foretold by David, testified to by the apostles. IV. The *ascension* of Jesus—also foretold by the Psalmist, and now witnessed in its effects. Peter makes a practical application of the whole, and in one full rich verse sets forth the sum and substance of gospel-requirements and gospel-promises ; the promises—the gift of pardon, and the gift of the Spirit ; the requirements—repentance and faith, the latter implied, not merely in their coming to be “baptized,” for that they had done at the bidding of John ; nor in coming to be baptized in the name of “Christ,” as a Messiah promised, for that more than 3000 would have consented to do ; but in coming to be baptized in the name of “Jesus Christ,” thus owning the crucified one as their Messiah already come. The door was set open, and

increasing numbers of the Jewish people, flocking in, found admission.

Acts x. Peter, by his vision, has learned a truth unknown to him before. He tried to shut out that dawning light; here was something of his former rashness, for old habits are not uprooted in a day. His Jewish prepossessions, of course, were strong; but when we remember John xii. 6-8, we wonder at his again daring to remonstrate, and still more do we wonder that he is not refused the work he is so unwilling to perform. At last he yields. At Cesarea he preaches Christ. Again his *life*—his *death*—his *resurrection*—and his *enthroned dignity*. The practical application he makes, is again the same; penitential faith required, pardon promised, and the gift of the Spirit received. The door is open to Gentiles and they believingly enter in.

Compare the two sermons—their subject and outline precisely alike, their mode slightly varied; to the Jew, more quotation of prophecy; to the Gentile, more statement of fact; but the truths, one and the same. *Illustration*:—The minister, preaching to the great congregation in the morning, and addressing the children in the afternoon, varies his style, but has the same message for each. *Proof-texts*:—The epistle to the Romans abounds with them, for it was

partly written to show that Jew and Gentile, while different in some respects, are alike as to two things—the *need* of salvation, and the *way* of salvation. Rom. i. 16 ; ii. 8–11 ; iii. 22–24, 29, 30 ; x. 11–13. *Lesson* :—For old and young, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, as well as Jew and Gentile, there is but one Saviour, one way of life, one hope of heaven.

In this case, the attention is almost exclusively drawn to Peter, what he did, what he said, what was his success, and what we may learn from his twofold commission. It is thus, we believe, that teachers ought to generalize or particularize—and generalize *here*, or particularize *there*—as the circumstances of the case may decide. Incidental teachings are not to be wholly neglected, but they must be kept in a subordinate place. You may let them drop, to be picked up by one, and passed unheeded by another of your scholars. But the prime truth you must so analyze, so prove, so insist on, that they shall all be without excuse if they reject it. Our allusion to more casual truths must be like the traveler's momentary turning aside to gather a botanical specimen or a sweet-scented blossom ; but we must take care that another and another attraction do not tempt us away from our mark. We have something else to do than attend to flower-gathering ; we have a highway to tread,

and a goal to reach. We come to the school, not to amuse merely, but to instruct ; and, if possible, so to instruct, that if the lesson fail of being taken home to the heart, the blame may not lie at our door.

II. Next in importance to the unity of our subject, is the divisional arrangement of it. To this the student must carefully address himself, asking :—

Does this passage treat of one thing, or more than one ? If one, is it viewed under different aspects ? If two, or more, what is the relationship between them ? Are they connected by priority or sequence, and linked together as cause and effect ? In other words, did the one merely happen after the other, or is it traceable to that other as its originating source ?

The answer to such queries will suggest an easy form into which the teaching may be cast. Not always, nor often, should a mechanical arrangement of this sort be made apparent to the class. Its frequently-manifest recurrence would be too formal and too sermon-like. The teacher will find such a plan of use to himself in the rearing of his fabric ; but he must let the scaffolding be removed when it has served his purpose.

III. The terms employed in the Scripture-passage will come next under review. There

will be the terms *as they stand*. Which of them will need explanation? What is the shortest and yet clearest definition which can be given of each? What the clue that will most rapidly lead the mind into its presence? If it is a word in general use, the dictionary may lend its aid for an apt synonym; if a theological phrase, the cyclopædia may be of use; if geographical, the atlas and the book of travels. The terms *as they might better stand* will also have to be noticed. The teacher must make himself acquainted with the approved rendering of each clause. He is not necessarily to say in every case, "This is translated wrong," and "That might be better rendered." But he must bear the true version in his mind, that it may give a tone and a turn to his exposition. Many a time he can take our English Bible just as it is, and yet deduce from it the more accurate meaning which our translators may have failed to convey. Where he cannot succeed in bringing out the true sense clearly from the textual reading, he will often be able to do so by reference to the marginal notes, which many of the children now find in their own cheap Bibles. Attention, also, to what is printed in italics, will be found of great use; since a different rendering of what our translators have marked as avowedly an addition of their own, may very

safely be made, and will tend to keep up the right impression that, so far from being emphatic as in other books, the words thus printed in our Bibles are those on which least stress is to be laid. And finally, in those rare instances when no other alternative is left us, we must boldly state what is deemed to be the just reading; since it is undoubtedly better that children's faith should be shaken in the accuracy of the version than in the truthfulness of the Book. We subjoin an example to illustrate each of the above cases.

Ps. xxxiv. 19-21. The teacher need not say that "the righteous" should here be translated "the Righteous One;" but he can educe that sense by calling attention to the TEXT itself. There is a contrast between verse 17 and verse 19. That speaks of many; "the Lord delivereth them." This speaks of one; "the Lord delivereth him." Verse 20 shows us who that one is, for it is quoted, in John xix. 36, as a prophecy of Christ; and it can be applied to none but Christ. It is not true of all the righteous; God has made no such promise to all his people; he does suffer the bones of his people to be broken; so that these words are true only of Christ;—he is the righteous person spoken of here; just as Stephen, Acts vii. 52, calls him "the Just One." Look at verses 17 and 19 again now, and see

how beautifully they come together ; God delivers the many righteous, for the sake of that One who is so dear to him, and by whom alone they are made righteous. Finally, verse 21 reminds us of the fate which is threatened to all who are the enemies of Christ, the Righteous One.

Zech. iv. 10. The answer to this question seems unintelligible in the text. But take the marginal reading, and the fine contrast comes out directly. "Who hath despised the day of small things? since the seven eyes of the Lord shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel—(even) they (those seven eyes) which run to and fro through the whole earth." When once the emblems have been explained, how easy to bring out the teaching, that human scorn is less than nothing, if the all-perfect and all-controlling God of providence looks down with approval!

2. Sam. xxiii. 3-5. Here we may twice alter the italics. This is a prophecy of Christ. Turn "must" into "shall," and we have the beautiful prediction of the King in Zion, "he that ruleth over men *shall* be just, ruling in the fear of God; and he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."

Exod. xii. 35, 36. The Israelites did not

“borrow,” for they never meant to return these things to their owners. The Egyptians did not “lend,” for they never expected to have their jewels back. This must be DIFFERENTLY TRANSLATED. The word can mean *to borrow*, for it is used of the borrowed ax, 2 Kings vi. 5. But it far oftener means *to ask*. The sense requires it to be so here. The Israelites *asked* or *demand-ed* of the Egyptians; and the Egyptians *gave* unto them. The former were not unreasonable in seeking a compensation for their hard service; the latter were glad to get rid of them on any terms and at any cost.

IV. Next to the examination of terms, the study of circumstances will be needful. Where was the scene? what the scenery? who the actors? who the spectators? what was said? what was the occasion of the words? and what their result? A lively figuring of the whole and of each particular must be inwrought into the mind. There must be a picturing of place and incident. In this work, the fancy may occasionally do its part, though it must ever be severely kept in check. The highly imaginative, if they roam uncurbed, may wander far astray from the limits of sobriety and truth. Where judgment is not in vigorous exercise, the descriptive attempts of a novice are very likely to land him in absurdities, like one who represented the father

in the parable as "rubbing his spectacles to make sure that it was his son whom he spied in the distance," oblivious of the fact that such optical aids to vision were unknown in theory till the twelfth century, and in practice till the thirteenth. We want no such false and feeble additions to the truthful and touching narratives of holy writ. What we ask for is that careful analysis, which seizes on every iota of the revealed description, and makes the most it can of the very smallest hint that stands upon the record. The more real your portraiture, the more acceptable. Children delight to know, of a surety, that their teacher, instead of working up for them a cunningly devised fable, can show them a warrant for every touch he adds. There are occasions, when a tintured drapery may be hung around the form of truth; but let it honestly stand only for what it is worth. Do not pass it off as an undyed article. Be careful to put in a qualifying phrase:—"I can easily think;" "Is it not likely?" "Can you not imagine?" "We may well believe," &c. Do not absolutely say that David, or Daniel, or Eli, or Elymas, "was" in this place, or in that position, unless you have observed some guiding word that justifies the assertion. If you give out as fact what is mere fabrication, it is to be feared that when posed by the characteristic question;

so ready to flow, even from the lisping tongue, "Was it really so?" or, "Are you sure?" your character for veracity will be endangered, and the confidence of your pupils weakened. Openly avow that you are not sketching from nature, and you will then carry with you the young imagination. Closely restrict yourself, at another time, to the expansion of actual truth, and you will then give wholesome exercise to youthful faith.

There are not a few to whom such picture-drawing is the hardest part of their tutorial work. It may be from deficiency of imagination. It may be from vagueness of realization. Some cannot so shake off the trammels of self, or the associations of the present, as to form a vivid idea of scenes that are distant, or events that are bygone. The habit, however, is worth acquiring. Strive after facility in this art, and in the end you may come to find it easier than now you think. What you have to do is first to inform your imagination, and then to exercise it. Inform it by historic and geographic reading. Exercise it by meditation and practice. Accustom yourself at times to live and think in the past. Make a mental sojourn now and then in some far-off eastern clime, amid oriental scenery and manners. Take a paper, and try your hand at pictorial writing, while under the impression

of such trains of thought. But let your first essaying of this kind be wholly private. Do not try to paint for others, while painfully conscious that, in truth, you are nothing of a painter. Be content with remaining a copyist of other men's works, so long as you feel no kindlings of the artist within you. And when first you venture to give your scholars an original picturing, let it be in the clear, bold outline, given by a few effective strokes. Do not attempt a filling in, far less a coloring, till your hand is well in the work, else you will find it a failure

This part of our theme branches out in another important direction. There are moral as well as scenic pictures, that may be given; and those who cannot excel in the latter, may have a peculiar aptitude for the former. Let them not neglect the gift. There is a charm which even children can feel in the exploring of the soul's labyrinthine recesses. There is utility in it as well as pleasure. The advantages are numerous. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." What better foundation, therefore, for the inculcating of self-knowledge, than to unfold the mental workings, which actually did, or possibly might, actuate men, women, and children, of like passions with themselves? What better training, moreover, to the

judgment of charity, than the jealous care with which, in the reading of Bible-history, a teacher will not let a bad motive be imputed, where a good one can, by any possibility, be supposed, and will not let even the character of an Ahab or a Judas be aspersed by any charge that is not clearly proven? What surer warning against trust in outward appearances, than showing how the "I thank thee," uttered by the Pharisee, in the temple, was any thing but an index to a right kind of gratitude—or making it evident that "if the robbers had fallen upon the good Samaritan, before he was able to execute his design, his work would have been accomplished in the sight of God, whereas if the priest and Levite had given help, on account of approaching spectators, the deed would have been of no value?"

The searching out of parallel passages and suitable illustrations will follow, or be intermingled with the above-named portions of a teacher's preparatory study. Of these, and of all his processes of thought, the teacher will do well to make notes as he goes on—notes more detailed, perhaps, in their minutiae, than those we have given on the chapters in Acts; but not necessarily so lengthy, since what is written for our own eye, may be more concise in words, and more abbreviated in syllables, than what has to convey our thought to a stranger's mind. The writing of the notes

must not be for the sake of having the paper in hand at the class, for nothing would be surer than this to cramp a teacher's energy, and damp the interest of his scholars ; but for the sake of further reference during the week, and careful re-perusal as the Sabbath duties approach. Any difficulties, that may have arisen, may also be entered on a slip of paper, with a view to their solution, as opportunity may offer, whether in private converse, or at a teacher's conference, or by access to a larger library.

This reminds us of the privilege afforded in the attending of preparatory classes. It is not our province to discuss the way wherein these are best conducted, but to point out how a teacher, taking them as they are, can attend them with most profit to himself and others. The two chief types which such institutes present, are the conversational and the practical. The former has respect to the matter of instruction ; the latter to its mode. In the one case, the teachers meet to talk over the lesson, to collate their notes, and to furnish mutual aid in the consideration of what is to be taught. In the other, they assemble, and give ear, while a lesson is actually taught in their presence, by one of the number, to a group of monitors or children. Sometimes it is conducted by a senior teacher, and serves for a pattern ; sometimes by a junior teacher,

and is useful for practice ;—the exercise being closed by remarks, from one and another, as to the way in which the given ideas can best be imparted to the learner. A well-conducted class, on either of these systems, or on any modified form of the two, is a great boon to the Sunday-school with which it is connected. United in prayer, the fellow-laborers become more united in affection ; and united in consultation, they will probably become more united in effort. Their joint work becomes a co-operation in respect of the means as well as of the end. Keeping side by side in the field, and seeking to deal stroke by stroke, with consentaneous force they cheer and stimulate each other in the arduous task.

Much of the individual benefit and the social enjoyment of such meetings, must depend on the spirit in which every member attends them. Let a man go there to show off his own astuteness, and he does himself an injury while he disgusts others. Let him go as a learner, and by the questions he starts, he may not only serve himself, but implant new germs of thought in the minds of his companions. If a man goes to the class, wise in his own conceit, saying, "I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing," he will come empty away. If he repairs thither, conscious of his soul's barrenness,

and thirsting for supplies of knowledge, he will not scorn to receive instruction even from one less cultured than himself. Above all, disputations should be avoided. Each may speak, and speak freely. Every one should do his or her part. Do not fail, then, to contribute your quota to the general fund. Do not shyly or selfishly keep back the results of your private forethinkings on the subject. If an idea is started with which you do not concur, you are bound to state your difference of opinion. Every new argument that you can adduce on your side of the question, you do right in bringing forward. But if, when you have advanced every plea, you have neither silenced your opponent, nor yet been convinced by him, do not needlessly prolong the discussion. Do not carry it on for the mere sake of achieving a victory, or having the last word. Especially do not, to use a sea-phrase, "hang about." Do not idly repeat arguments you have already used. The less important the matter, the sooner you should yield; for thus you will be the better heeded, when on more momentous points you find it essential to be firm. He who disputes about every straw, will gain small attention when he would do battle for a weighty truth. While we "contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," we should do it earnestly; not with the vehemence of men concerned for their

own powers in debate, but with the seriousness of men who are "valiant for the truth" of God.

Do not imagine that you are of necessity to differ from each other, or that truth can be elicited only by controversy. Agree when you can; and be glad when you do agree. Allow others an opinion of their own, remembering that "town-clocks" do "not" all "strike at the same moment." Let "brotherly love continue." Let your communings be a taking of "sweet counsel together." So shall you find, that "as iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend."



CHAPTER II.

DUTIES IN THE SCHOOL.

THE teacher, having well studied his lesson is equipped for his work. He is furnished with the material, and he has now to use it. He has his message ; he must now go forth and deliver it. To his stewardship are intrusted the doctrinal and practical teachings, which were committed to Titus ; and he must now look to the faithful dispensing of them. Like that young herald of the cross, he has to tell of a Saviour “ who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity ;” and has to draw from this fact the inferential lesson that “ denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” These are the things which have been revealed to him, and which he is to make known. These are the things which he is to “ speak and exhort ;”—an exhortation which is to be accompanied, when needful, by “ rebuke ;”—a rebuke which, when administered, must be “ with all authority.” Teaching and discipline are the two

grand features of his actual labors in the classroom.

TEACHING.—The skillful ministration of God's word includes not only an adjusting, balancing, harmonizing, and *proportioning* of its divers statements, but also an intelligent *apportioning*, dealing out, and distributing of its truths to the varied characters of those who "seek knowledge at our lips." The inquiry, therefore, has naturally arisen, How can a teacher best secure the instilling of ideas into the understanding and memory of each child before him? shall he teach individually or collectively? If he occupies himself with one at a time, will he not meanwhile be neglecting the others? if he gathers all around him, will not the slothful-hearted fail to imbibe the teaching thus promiscuously scattered? Such were the doubts felt by those to whom the work was new. But in the present day this can be regarded as no longer an open question. Scarcely is it to be believed that the individual system would now find one serious advocate. Earnestly is it to be hoped that such a method will soon find not one inconsiderate adherent. Those who have but one day in the week for teaching, cannot afford to subdivide the time by giving each child but an eighth or tenth part of his attention. The

week-day teacher, in giving his ordinary lessons, would not think of having every pupil brought up for separate tuition, unless he had but two or three so widely apart in their progress as to baffle all attempts at classification. No such disadvantage as this falls to the lot of the Sunday-school teacher, whose pupils, however varying in character, are tolerably, if not perfectly, on a level with each other in attainments.

There is a possibility of so teaching all combinedly, that the effect shall be as if each were taught alone. Let the dullest in the class be made to comprehend, and the brighter ones will not have been listening in vain. Every word that is needed to make an idea penetrate the obtusest intellect, will drive it the further and the firmer into the minds of the rest. Nor only so, but they will—unconsciously to themselves, perhaps—be learning how to instruct; and the seed thus undesignedly sown, thus unwittingly received, may yield an unexpected harvest in the day when they rise up to fill a teacher's post. The eye, moreover, may help in giving an individual application to the truth collectively taught. Is there a proud-souled child in your class? you need not take him aside to lecture him on humility; but, speaking for the benefit of all, you can advert to the subject, and keep to it, till you perceive that, whether

he may profit by it or not, he at least understands the bearing of your remarks.

One thing, indeed, the children must individually do. They learn, and must learn their lessons separately. "There is one thing, young gentlemen," was the favorite saying of an elocution master, "one thing I cannot do for you; I cannot learn your recitations; that must be your own act and deed." And as the teacher cannot learn for the pupil, so one scholar cannot learn for another. Again; it is not always that all the children in a class can learn lessons of precisely the same length. The memory of one is tenacious; that of another, less retentive. To limit the lesson of the former by the capacity of the latter, would be to check his aspirations after progress. To force the feeble into competition with the stronger, would be to dishearten him. Nevertheless, we are not constrained, on either of these accounts, to hear separately what has been thus individually learned. Let the starting-point of each pupil's lesson be the same. Collect the class around you. Let none know who will be the first, or who the second, called on to repeat. See that those of weaker memories have to say part of that which *they* have learned: but see to it also, that those who profess to have learned the whole, are tested by an occasional appeal to them when

least they expect it. Let the repetition be gone through more than once, if need be, that all may have their turn. Thus the whole class will be simultaneously engaged in the rehearsal.

The length prescribed for each child's lesson must never exceed his capability. Ascertain how much can be well done, and never ask for more. Do not overload the mind any more than you would the body. The mental digestion must not be over-taxed, else it will be enfeebled. Insist on accuracy rather than abundance. Show that you esteem quality above quantity. Let "little and well" be your motto, until the time comes when you can have "much and well." Never was plan more contrary to common sense, than the old fashion of doubling a lesson by way of punishment for the ill-saying of it. When lessons are incorrectly learned, it is best to assume, that want of power, rather than want of will, is the cause. Shorten a child's task for the coming week, every time he fails of doing what you thought apportioned to his capacity. Take the blame to yourself; "I suppose I set you too much; we must have rather less next time." Such a course will usually animate the discouraged, awake the ambition of the apathetic, and even put to shame the inveterately idle; so that one and all will cry out for more and longer lessons, instead of finding their burden heavy.

Children always progress more rapidly when they progress *con amore*. If permission be asked to learn more, grant it as a privilege, but always on the condition that repetition be perfect. You will thus not only secure the accurate commitment of the task itself, but will be enforcing the important habit of letting all that is done be *well* done.

In hearing a recitation, take care, if a child stumbles, that you do not immediately prompt, or allow others to prompt, the right word. Try whether a question will not avail to suggest it. Make the exercise of memory a reasonable service, by calling in the aid of the understanding. Let every lesson learned be a direct vehicle of teaching. Let it not be memorized, till it has been first explained. Let it not be repeated without being followed up by questions on the explanation previously given. Do not be afraid of going over the same ground too often. Recapitulation is indispensably necessary with young children, if the truth is to go beyond the mere surface of their minds. It should be both a regular and an incidental thing. The brief examination, which accompanies each lesson, being a thing expected, will stimulate to attentiveness. The casual introduction of questioning on some by-gone lesson, will not only revive what else might fade away from recollection, but will tend

to show how one truth is ever linked with another, and how a lesson, once learned, ought to be remembered for life.

Important as the reciting of Scripture is, the teacher must take care to compress it within reasonable compass. The lesson has to follow, and for this he must secure ample time. It is usual to have the chapter, or section of a chapter, on which the lesson is founded, first read through—verse by verse. Mere verbal accuracy, with attention to the indicated stops, is all that can be sought. Children must not be expected to read with feeling, until they have been led to seize the intent and enter into the spirit of a passage. Intelligent reading pre-supposes at least a perception of the sense, if not an appreciation of the beauty attaching to what is read. When once the mind is filled with right ideas, and the heart with right emotions, emphasis and expression will almost assuredly come of themselves; and where they are not natural and spontaneous, it is worse than useless to force them into a premature display. You may do well to read in turn with your scholars, and thus let them hear what good reading is, as contrasted with the mechanical utterance of monotonous words and syllables. But do not attempt to make them actors. Limit your attention to two things. See that the class read correctly, and

that they read reverentially. With a view to both these ends, make it a rule that they read slowly and distinctly. Where a verse ends only with a comma, or any other of the minor stops, let it be understood that the reader is to go on with the verse ensuing, in order that there may not be an awkward break, and a no less awkward change of voice, where the sense cannot admit a transition of the kind. If you perceive one child looking off the book, or suspect that another is counting the verses that he may con over the next that will come to his turn, catch his eye if you can; but failing to do this, call on him to read at once. The class will be interrupted, it is true; but less frequently than if wandering of attention were allowed to grow into a habit.

The reading will be followed by the necessary teaching, which is to unfold and apply the truth or truths contained in the selected portion. Here will come into use the notes and hints gathered up in the hours and moments of preparatory work and thought. To lay down definite rules for an exercise of this sort would be to deprive it of the freedom which is its highest charm. A good teacher will not only speak to one set of children differently from the way in which he would instruct another set, but he will not make the method he pursues one Sabbath a law for his guidance on the Sunday following. There must

be in him a readiness to execute any requisite manœuvre the instant it is called for. When the road is smooth, and the temper of the steed is docile, the equestrian can pursue a straight and rapid course ; but if he comes across a morass, he may have to go a considerable way round, before he is brought alongside of the place where he would alight.

But while laws cannot be given, an example or two may be supplied. These examples may be specially useful to teachers in schools where question books are not used. We hope it will not be long until good question books will be used in every school ; and the lesson be uniform.

We have Old Testament history again to-day, my boys. You remember last year we had the lives of the good men mentioned in the book of ? *John*. Genesis, when it was Old Testament-lessons, teacher.—And we read in Genesis about Adam, and Abel, and ? *Tom*. Noah.—And ? *Henry*. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. *Alfred*. And we left off with Joseph, teacher.—What book comes next to Genesis in your Bibles ? *Robert*. Exodus.—Well : we shall have to go on with that, when we want to read about what happened after Joseph's time. But there was a good man who most likely lived before Joseph, and before Jacob ; perhaps about the same time as Abraham. We did not read

about this good man before, because he is not mentioned in the book of Genesis. But now we will go back a little in the history, and talk about the life of Job. That was his name, Job. Where do we read of him? *Tom*. There's the book of Job; is that it?—Yes; turn to it; how many chapters are there? *Henry*. Forty-two.—Quite right; yet there are only four out of all these forty-two chapters that tell us any thing about Job's life. Do you know what the rest of the book is about? You shall find it out for yourselves. Read the first verse of the nineteenth chapter. *Alfred*. "Then Job answered and said" . . . —Stop there: don't mind its being only a comma; that's all we want just now. Read the first verse of the next chapter. *Robert*. "Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said."—Now the beginning of the twenty-first chapter in the same way. *John*. "But Job answered and said."—Go on to the twenty-second. *Tom*. "Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said."—Do you see now what these chapters are about? *Alfred*. Yes, teacher, about different people talking, and what they said: and each one's got a chapter to himself.—Sometimes more than a chapter: ah! you'll see it in the very next. The twenty-third begins, "Then Job answered and said;" but in the twenty-fourth there is nothing of the kind, for it is Job still

speaking all through those two chapters. *Alfred.* And then what a short one of Bildad's next !— Yes, the speeches of these different people were sometimes long, and sometimes short, according to what they had to say ; just as it is when you and I are talking together on Sundays : sometimes I go on for a while, and then I stop for you to speak ; and you give me a long answer, or a short one, as it suits. So you see this book of Job is mostly what is called a dialogue ; it is an account of what was said by one, and what was answered by another ; and so on. You would like to know *what* they were talking about ? I would rather tell you that in the afternoon, for you will be able to understand it better after we have done our morning's lesson.

Now let me see if you remember when Job lived ? *John.* About Abraham's time.—How do we know that ? *Tom.* I suppose it says so in his life.—Did I say we were quite sure Job lived at that time, or that we had reason to think so ? *Tom.* You said, most likely it was then.—Exactly so. We are not certain, because we are not told it in so many words : and yet we are pretty nearly sure. We know it by looking very carefully at all that Job and his friends said to each other, and by noticing what were the customs of the age in which he lived. You know the manners of our time are in some

respects different from what the manners of other times were. In the reign of Henry VIII. or Richard II., or any of the other old kings of England that you read about at school, people dressed differently, and built their houses differently, and talked differently from what we do ; so that if any one found a written conversation or dialogue between two or three Englishmen, it would not be difficult to know, from what they said, whether they lived nearest to the time of Queen Elizabeth or of Queen Victoria. Just in this way the book of Job has in it certain proofs or signs which show at what time he lived. I will tell you one of these as an example. When we talked about the call of Abraham, do you remember what reason we found for his having to leave his father's house ? *Alfred*. Because they were idolaters, teacher.—And what were the first gods ever worshiped by idolaters ? *Robert*. The sun and the moon.—Do you mean the sun and moon themselves, or images of them ? *Alfred*. Only the real sun and moon at first, teacher ; but afterwards, when they found clouds hid the sun, and sometimes there was no moon, they began to make images that they could have always by them.—Very good : it was in *Jacob's* time that this idol or image-worship is first mentioned in the book of Genesis ; the idolatry of *Abraham's* day seems to have been the worship

of the heavenly bodies themselves. Now if you were to search the book of Job through from beginning to end, you would not see one single word about graven or molten images ; the only idolatry of which Job ever spoke was the worship of “the sun *when it shined*, or the moon *walking in brightness*.” This looks as if images had not yet begun to be worshiped, and therefore looks as if Job lived near about the time of ?
Robert. Of Abraham.

We have talked long enough of *when* Job lived ; now we will see *where*. The first verse tells us it was “in the land of Uz.” Uz was in the northern part of Arabia. Look at it on this map. Here is Arabia, stretching out from the Red Sea, across this way toward the great river Euphrates. This part of it, you see, is a wide desert. It was to the north of this desert that Job lived ; and across this desert from time to time came fearful storms of violent wind ; you will read of one presently. And you will also read of the Sabeans and Chaldeans coming and taking away what belonged to Job. Here you can see where they came from. The Sabeans, from this side, nearer the Red Sea ; and the Chaldeans, from that side, where the Euphrates is. Here, where you see the word Edom written, was the neighborhood where Job’s friends lived ; they did not all live in the same town or village,

but they lived near enough to each other to arrange together that they would go and pay Job a visit. And here they found him, in the land of ? *John. Uz.*

One thing more before you begin to read. I spoke of Job as a good man. I should like you to see how he is mentioned by God himself as one of those three who were among the best that ever lived. Read Ezek. xiv. 14. Job, you see, was worthy to be placed beside Noah and Daniel. He was not only good, but eminently good. Can you tell me what good thing he was most famous for? *Alfred.* Oh! I know, teacher; for mother always keeps saying, when father or any one puts her out, "I am sure one had need have the patience of Job."—Yes; we are reminded in the New Testament of Job's patience. We shall see in this morning's lesson why he needed patience, and how he showed it. Read the first chapter. [The children read it through.]

In the first verse we have Job's character. Nothing is said of his patience. It had not been tried yet. It was not needed yet. All was bright and happy. Job had all that heart could wish. Patience, like a bright star, shines out in the dark night of affliction. That time was coming; but it was not come yet. What sort of a man was Job in his days of prosperity? *John.*

“Perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.”—Job departed from evil, and this was because he “feared God.” Those two things always go together. There is no *real* fear of God, where there is no eschewing of evil. But there are some men who only *pretend* to fear God, and who only *outwardly* depart from evil: was it so with Job? *Henry*. No; he was “upright.”—Perfectly sincere and upright. He was not one that put on false appearances. All was straight-forward and open about him; all was real and true. Did he live alone, or was he a married man? *Alfred*. He was married, for he had “seven sons and three daughters.”—Yes; and we have to read about his wife this afternoon. Was he rich or poor? *Robert*. Rich.—Prove it, Robert. *Robert*. He had “7000 sheep, and 3000 camels, and 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 she-asses, and a very great household.”—Is that the way we count up a man’s riches in this country? *John*. No, we go by what money he’s got.—We reckon his thousands of dollars, and his acres of land; but in the east they reckoned by thousands of cattle, and hundreds of men-servants and maid-servants. Were Job’s children grown up? *Tom*. Yes, they had houses of their own.—Did they ever visit each other? *Henry*. Yes, they went and feasted. *Alfred*. And got their sisters to go and be with them.—Job had not only a large

but a loving family. These two things do *not* always go together. There are some brothers and sisters who only vex and torment each other. But Job's sons and daughters felt toward one another as brothers and sisters should feel. They invited each other, and accepted each other's invitations. There was not one exception; no one was left out; no one was unkindly treated; all were in harmony and peace. We are told that they went "every one his day;" perhaps, that means that they kept one another's birth-days. Is that a wrong thing? *Robert*. I think not; is it, teacher?—By no means wrong in itself. All depends on doing it rightly. Was Job afraid his children might get any harm by it? *John*. Yes, they might "have sinned and cursed God in their hearts."—Job was afraid they might have been doing what the Apostle Jude calls "feeding themselves without fear;" going to excess; perhaps drinking, till they forgot their duty to God and to man. Or if they did not go so far as this, they might have been sharing God's mercies, and forgetting to ask his blessing, or to give him thanks. Let us remember that on our feast-days and holidays we must be more than ever watchful over ourselves, because it is then we are often more than ever in danger of thoughtlessness and sin. What did Job do when he felt his fear about his

children? *Tom.* He got up early in the morning, and offered a sacrifice for every one.—Like all pious parents, he was anxious his children should be forgiven and saved. Could his sacrifices save them? *Henry.* No, but they were types of Christ, who was going to be the Saviour.—And could Job's faith in the coming Saviour be accepted instead of their own faith? You all say, "No." Well, remember that; your parents and friends, like Job, may pray for you, and point to the sacrifice, and may ask God to forgive you for Christ's sake; but this will not save you; you must yourselves look at the sacrifice, and take Christ for *your* Saviour, and pray for the pardon of your own sins. Was it only once that Job did this? *Henry.* No, he did it "continually."—And while he went on fearing God, and trying to train his family in the ways of the Lord, had Job any enemy? Who is it that most dislikes to see people doing right? *Alfred.* Satan, teacher; and he came and spoke against Job.—Yes; we read of a day when God called his angels together, for that is the meaning of "sons of God" here—angels. God called them together to give an account of where they had been, and what they had been doing. And the evil angels were there too, for Satan was among them. When Satan was asked where he came from, what answer did

he give? *Robert.* "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."—This was a very wide kind of an answer. He did not come to the point. He did not say what part of the world he had been looking at most closely. He would have been glad to avoid telling what was in his thoughts. But God knew; and so a question was asked, "Hast thou" ? *John.* "Hast thou considered my servant Job," &c.—"Hast thou considered?" What is that in the margin; some of you that have your own Bibles can tell me. *Alfred.* "Hast thou set thy heart on my servant Job?"—Ah! God could read Satan's heart. God knew that he had been noticing Job, and been thinking about him, and was now wishing to tempt him. When Satan saw it was no use to try and conceal the ill-will he had toward Job, what did he accuse him of? *Tom.* He said, "Doth Job fear God for nought?"—Well, what was that accusing him of? [No answer: the question must be brought down to the level of their apprehension.] If any one said of you, "Ah! they needn't pretend that they go to Sunday-school only to learn! you may depend on it there is something else in the wind!" Suppose anybody said that, what would it be accusing you of? *Alfred.* Of bad motives, teacher.—Well, just so, Satan accused Job of

bad motives ; accused him of serving God only for the sake of the good things God gave him. How did Satan propose to try whether it was so? *John*. "Put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face."—"Touch all that he hath ;" touch it, so as to smite, injure, destroy it.

Did God consent that Job should be thus tried? *Tom*. Yes, he said Satan might go and do what he pleased.—*Whatever* he pleased? *Henry*. No, he wasn't to touch Job himself, but only Job's things.—That's well worth noticing. God may give Satan power to tempt ; but when he does, he always tells him how far he may venture to go, and bids him go no further. Satan is chained, though his chain is a very long one. If we think of this, it will encourage us in striving against him, just as you remember "Christian" was cheered when he saw the lions were chained. What time did Satan choose for beginning his work? *Alfred*. One of the feast days.—Yes ; it was like the wicked one, like the enemy of man, like the hateful heart of Satan, to delight in turning a day of joy into a day of sorrow. What was Job's first trouble? *Robert*. The Sabeans took all his oxen.—What was the second? *John*. A fire from heaven burned up his sheep.—That fire was lightning, probably. What was his third sorrow? *Tom*.

Three armies of the Chaldeans all fell on his camels and carried them off.—And the fourth? *Henry*. The wind from the desert beat down the house with all his children in it.—Had Job lost any thing beside his oxen, and his sheep, his camels, and his ten children? *Alfred*. I don't see as he had, teacher.—Look again at what each of the four messengers said. *Alfred*. Oh! he'd lost his servants; a great lot killed every time, and only these four lived to tell it.—Of his out-door servants only four were left; and perhaps some of his house-servants had gone to help at the feast; and if so, they had died. Did Job's sore troubles come far apart? *Robert*. No; each man came up before the other had done speaking.—This is often the way in which afflictions come upon us. You know when once the weather breaks, as we call it, we have shower upon shower, and one wet day after another, before it clears again. So the end of one trouble is often the beginning of another. Job's grief came upon him as fast as his ears could take in the words of those who told him. There was no space, no breathing-time between. In the early morning we can fancy that he was sitting calm and peaceful at his tent door, thinking of his absent children, and rejoicing that they had so bright and beautiful a day for their happy meeting. His wife, most likely, was inside the tent,

and some of the servants who had to look after things at home; but his flocks were all out grazing in different directions under the care of trusty men. Job felt no particular fear or care. I suppose he thought this day would pass as smoothly as many such days had passed before. If only his children were kept free from sin! Their falling into iniquity was the one thing of which he was afraid! But Job had cause to fear, when least he knew it. It is often when we think ourselves safest, that we wake up to find dangers standing thick around us. All earthly things, you know, are uncertain. The brightest day may be overcast with clouds. The richest man may sink into poverty. The strongest man may be overtaken with sickness. The happiest home may become a house of weeping. "Boast not thyself" *John*. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."—Yes; and those words, taken in their full sense, mean even more than that. They mean, Boast not thyself of to-night, for thou knowest not what an hour may bring forth. "The rising morning can't assure, that we shall end the day;" nor can it assure us that if we live till evening, we shall close the day as happily as we began it. This is exactly what Job found out. As he sat thinking, and perhaps praying, trouble after trouble

was coming on him, though he did not yet suspect it. He heard no fighting, he saw no lightning, he felt no hurricane; but the war, and the lightning, and the stormy wind were doing their work, all unknown to him. Presently the tidings burst upon him. He heard a footstep hastily running towards him; he looked up and saw one who had gone out with the oxen and the ploughs, returning home, pale with fear, and breathless with excitement. While he listened to the sad news, a second drew nigh. This time it was a shepherd, and he had to tell of the sheep smitten by a stroke from heaven. Before Job had time to put his thoughts in order, a camel-driver rushed in, with another tale of wo; and now Job knew that he was poor indeed. Oxen and asses, sheep and camels, entirely lost, he was stripped of all his earthly riches. Of *all*? was I right in saying that? *Henry*. No, he had his children left.—Ah! so he had good reason to think; but, at that very moment, there came a fourth messenger, and he also was a herald of ill news; and the news he brought was the very worst of all. The loss of a whole world's wealth does not so touch a parent's heart as the loss of a beloved child. Don't you remember, Robert, when your eldest sister was buried last autumn, that it was not only your mother who wept over her coffin, but even your

father, strong man though he was, turned away to hide the tears he was wiping from his eyes, as he thought how loving she had been? Then what must Job have felt, at losing, not one daughter, but three; and not his daughters only, but his sons as well! Not one left to be the comfort of his old age! All dead; all taken from him at once; all taken from him by a sudden and terrible accident, without a moment's warning, and that too at one of their feasts. Why was it worse at that time than at any other? *Alfred*. Because it seemed so to break in on the joy, like.—But do you think if a man is prepared to die, that the place and the time are of much real consequence? *Robert*. No, teacher, you taught us those lines about “Death cannot come to him untimely, who is fit to die.”—If a man, who is prepared to die, should be suddenly taken away in the midst of some party of friends, would death break in upon his joys, as *Alfred* said? What do you think about it yourself, my lad? *Alfred*. No, teacher, because he'd be going away to better joys.—Well, then, you must give me some better reason why Job would feel his children's death more on a feast day than any other. *Henry*. Perhaps he thought they mightn't be prepared.—Yes; you recollect his fear lest at such times they should sin; and now he would fear lest any of them had died in sin,

unrepenting and unforgiven. It was too late for him to offer his sacrifices now. Sacrifices could be of no use to the dead in Job's day, any more than prayers for the dead can be of any use in our day. "As the tree falls, so it lies; and as man is, when he leaves this world, so he remains, pardoned or unpardoned, forever and forevermore. Job's fourth trial was indeed the heaviest of them all.

Now tell me how he bore up under this weight of grief? Was he calm and resigned, or was he wild and frantic? *Tom.* Wild and frantic, teacher. *Alfred.* No, he was calm and patient.—Two opinions! now let us find out which is right. You spoke first, Tom: tell us why you think Job was wild and frantic. *Tom.* Because he got up and tore his mantle, and tore the hair off his head, and flung himself down on the ground.—What have you to say to that, Alfred? *Alfred.* He did so, teacher, because it was the Jewish custom.—Not only a Jewish, but an eastern custom. Job, you remember, was not an Israelite; he was an Arabian. But all eastern nations had the same kind of customs in their every-day life. They were not so quiet as we are. They were never content, as we are, with looks and words, but showed every thing by outward signs and actions. So when they were in grief, they always rent their clothes;

and that was as much a sign of mourning among them as putting on black clothes is with us. What was their second outward token of sorrow? *John*. Shaving their heads; at least that's what Job did next.—One reason for this was that they might then put ashes on their heads. Just notice, Tom, that you made a mistake in saying that Job *tore* off his hair. The text does not tell us that; but says, he shaved his head or had it shaved. He did it on purpose. And as to his falling down upon the ground, we are told the reason of that. *Robert*. He "worshipped."—Yes; he cast himself down in sorrow before God. He lay prostrate on the ground as an humble supplicant, asking for help. Instead of carrying his head high, and complaining, as we hear so many do, that he was hardly dealt with, he bent himself in the lowest possible attitude, as one who felt that he did not deserve any of God's mercies. Are we told what Job said on this occasion? *Henry*. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither."—Let us explain that, before we go on. There is a text which gives us the same meaning in other words: 1 Tim. vi. 8. Read it. *Alfred*. "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."—When Job says, "I shall return *thither*," he means *into the earth*: he refers to the time when he should

be buried. You will remember that easily, if you compare this verse with Gen. iii. 19. *Robert*. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return."—What Job meant is just this; that as he had no earthly possessions when he was born, so he should have none when he was dead. You see he was trying to resign himself to his loss; and so he here reminded his own heart, that if all these things had not left him, he must soon have left them. If he did not part with them before, he must part with them when he came to die. But you must not fancy, that Job was merely submitting to his fate because he couldn't help it. He was not quieting himself, as worldly men sometimes do, by saying, "What must be, must be." He had not forgotten whose hand it is that "orders all our mean affairs." How do you know he remembered this? *John*. He said, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away."—Nothing quiets the heart so much, or keeps it so patient under trouble, as remembering that it comes to us from God. Do any of you remember what Eli said, when he knew sorrow was coming? *Alfred*. "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."—We have need to think of those words, when little things vex us. We are apt to feel cross, and lay the blame on

this, that, or the other ; but if we remember that God orders all, and orders all wisely, then we shall be calm. In every little disappointment, just whisper to yourselves, "It is the Lord." You can't think how that will cheer you, and help you to bear it bravely. It kept Job from "charging" or accusing "God foolishly." Now tell me how Job felt toward the God who first gave, and then took away what he had given ? *Tom.* He said, "Blessed be the name of the Lord."—Was this what Satan had expected him to say ? *Henry.* No ; Satan thought he would curse God.—Instead of that he blessed, or thanked, God. It was as if he had said, "Thank God for giving ; and thank him no less for having taken away." Job could thank God for both. There are two lines of a hymn which show why we ought to thank God both for joy and sorrow :—

"God when he gives, supremely good ;
Nor less when he denies."

Which of those two lines is it easiest to believe ? *Alfred.* The first, teacher.—Ah ! yes ; it is easy to thank God for a well-spread table, and a full cup, and a happy home ; but quite another thing to thank him for sickness, and losses, and pain, and sorrow. Yet Job could do both. Now this brings us to the lesson I want you especially to take away with you.

We have seen a good man in joy. And we

have seen a good man in sorrow. But was it one man in joy, and another in sorrow? or the same good man, first in joy, and afterward in sorrow? *Tom.* The same man.—That is what I want you particularly to notice. The Job who was so patient in affliction, was the same Job who had “feared God and eschewed evil” in the day of prosperity. It was just because he had received, and enjoyed, and used all his mercies as God’s gifts, that he was able to give them all up at God’s call. With you, life is at present mostly joy. Though you have some sorrows, yet you are in the happiest of your years. Cares sit very lightly on you as yet. You love what is bright and smiling. And God has given you much to gladden your hearts. But then you must not count on keeping your pleasures. They may suddenly fly away, as Job’s did. There is no need for you to feel sad at this thought. Only see to it, that now you are found, like Job, fearing God and departing from evil. Practice last Sunday’s lesson, for it will help you to feel as Job felt: count up God’s mercies, and thank him for them every day, and then you will more easily be patient when he sends trials and troubles. You must be *godly in the day of joy, if you would be submissive in the day of sorrow.* Mark it; be godly in the day of joy, if you would be submissive in the day of sorrow!

Habit alone will guide the teacher to an idea of how much he must dilate, and how much contract his remarks to fill up the allotted interval. He will find it awkward to reach the end of his subject, and find there is time for more if he had aught to say ; but as annoying, on the contrary, to feel that he has dwelt so long on preliminary matters that he must leave unsaid what is of more vital importance. The practiced teacher will contrive to leave himself a wide margin, as it were. He will know how to condense all that is absolutely needful into less than would occupy the time. He will furnish himself with abundant enforcements of his lesson, that he may be at no loss to fill up a chasm at the last. He will deem it happy for himself and his class, if the bell surprises them long before his matter is exhausted or their attention wearied ; for at that summons, he will be prepared to wind up his teaching in some brief, emphatic, and well-suited sentence.

In the foregoing instance, the teacher has not been obliged to omit any thing that was essential to the matter in hand ; although, if time had allowed, he could have gone on illustrating the connection between Job's piety and Job's patience ; or could have shown that, though in affliction, we may turn from our evil ways, and find acceptance, like Manasseh, yet it is far more

honoring to God, and better for ourselves, that we should seek him as our highest joy in the season of our gladness, than that we should be merely driven to him for the first time as our shelter in the day of storm and darkness.

Enough has been said on teaching. We pass at once to the second branch of our class-work,—that without which the aptest thoughts and choicest words will fail to do their work.

DISCIPLINE.—The offices of “shepherd” and “king” have from time immemorial been held as strikingly parallel, and each office as involving the twofold duty of provision and of legislation—feeding and ruling—tending and governing. The same is true as to those who have the charge of souls. The Christian minister has to “feed the flock of God,” and he has also to “take the oversight thereof.” The teacher is to impart instruction; and, in order to this, he must also exercise authority. While gentleness so attempers his firmness as to keep it from being harsh or severe, firmness must so give a tone to his gentleness as to preserve it from assuming a type of weakness. Not for its own sake must authority be exercised, but only as a means to an end. Not constantly, therefore, must it be displayed, but only when its manifestation is needful. To “rule and not to show the sceptre,” is one of the

highest arts in the good management of children. The rein must be kept well in hand, but it must be lightly held, and used only when guidance is required, or when restiveness is evinced. There must be no assumption of dignity on the one hand, and no abnegation of it on the other.

Authority, to be thus exercised, must first be acquired. And here alone ought any difficulty to be felt. A teacher, well established in a class, ought to find it an easy thing to maintain order. Knowing the children, and known by them, it may reasonably be expected that he has taken his stand, put forth his influence, and won them to submission. There is, or should be, a fixed understanding, that he may require obedience, and that they must yield it. He has had time to drill his little army ; and, if he has done his part well, he probably finds them now under easy control. A new scholar, entering such a class, will almost of necessity be led on by the force of example. With the imitative spirit of his years, he will do as he sees the others trained to do. Any attempt at insubordination will most likely reduce him to the position of a "rara avis." Finding no sympathy from his fellow-scholars, he will not often try so uncomfortable an experiment, nor court what would be an unhonored notoriety.

"But," says a teacher, "while the one stick is

easily broken, the fagot resists our every attempt: what can I do, who am newly appointed to a class of children, some untrained—and others ill-trained, which is perhaps the worst evil of the two?" What are you to do? Take the analogy you have yourself supplied, and act upon its teaching. What you have to do must be accomplished by little and little.

"'Tis by repeating stroke on stroke
The woodman fells the biggest oak."

Gain one step at a time, and after awhile you will reach the journey's end. Pay special attention to the most unruly. Win *his* affections, and the victory is half gained. There are also some minor rules to be observed, some negative and some positive.

1. See that you do not make children naughty. Do not set yourself in battle-array against all their faults at once. The smaller evils may wear away of themselves in the lapse of time, or may disappear through the gradual working of new and better influences. Some bad habits are better circumvented than resisted. Opposition often serves to give intensity to childish tricks; nay, one lad will possibly be found learning the very thing which you are trying to make another unlearn. Enchain the attention of your class, and a score of their little restless ways will in-

stantaneously vanish. "Prevention is better than cure." If when there are slight indications of rising evil, a teacher begins to frown and scowl, the little cloud of mischief gathers strength and blackness as it rises against the gale ; whereas the sunny influence of a wise and loving treatment would have succeeded in dispersing it. Let us not forget that we are in our measure answerable for evils which we might have warded off. There are some who, by their fidgettiness and over-particularity, goad and fret their classes into ill-behavior ; and many of the faults they reprove are faults of their own evoking. Scold to the right and to the left, and you need not wonder if children, with so little to interest them, grow more and more troublesome. A skillful physician takes heed not to irritate a wound. The restorative power of nature, aided by traumatic medicaments, will often reduce inflammatory symptoms, which would be aggravated by an injudicious probing of the sore.

On the other hand, remember that neglect is often injurious. Treat a boy as a cypher, and you go far toward making him a rebel. Many there are who would rather attract notice in the way of reproof than let themselves be passed by unheeded. Let every one in your class feel that you have an eye on him and a care for him individually. Let each perceive that he will sooner

receive a word of encouragement for his right-doing than a word of blame for his ill-deeds. Encourage all attempts at what is right, even when the effort may not have been unaccompanied by failure. Watch your class, as the Most High ever watches us, to see who understands, who feels, who fears, who loves, and who obeys.

2. Do not exact an unreasoning obedience. Enlist a child's understanding on your side. Let him know why he is to submit. But observe a distinction here. The reason for your command, and the reason for his compliance, are two very different things. The former you are not bound to give ; you may often do best in withholding it. The obedience which springs from unquestioning faith is more valuable than that which will not take a single step without knowing its *because*. Till a child's confidence is gained, there may be wisdom in showing that that which is asked is a reasonable thing. But when he has learned to render the lower, you may train him for the higher kind of obedience. Show him that it is a duty to be subject to the powers that be. Explain to him that the only limit to the obedience we should pay to those in authority over us, is the subjection we owe to the higher authority of God. Let him learn to exercise his reason as to whether the demand is a lawful or an unlawful one ; but as to its wisdom, if a law-

ful thing, let him learn to put an humble trust in the judgment of those who know more and better than himself.

3. Do not frame a multiplicity of rules. Children are bewildered by an incessant "Do this," and "Don't do that." Let the laws you lay down for the maintenance of order be few, but explicit. One or two general precepts, that like axes strike at the root of all disorder, are immeasurably better than a host of minute maxims, which, like pruning knives, only lop off here a branch and there a twig, while new suckers are ever sprouting forth in wild luxuriance.

At the same time, never let a single direct infringement of your laws of order pass unproved. Let your few rules be known as stringent ones. One disobedient act, committed with impunity, opens the door for repeated contests between teachers and scholars. Madame Necker de Saussure, whose work on domestic education is well worth an earnest perusal, has observed on this point: "It is not so much the severity as the certainty of a punishment which renders it efficacious. If there be the least doubt as to its being executed, children not only willingly encounter the risk, but are even pleasurably excited by the idea of setting it at defiance."

4. Be careful not to waste your resources. Stave off the use of stronger measures, if and as

long as milder ones may avail. It is of immense importance to retain what may be called a reserve-power. The teacher should always be conscious, and make those around him conscious, that he might say more than he has chosen to say, and that if the present warning be unheeded, the next will be more pointed and more potent. Those who are always remonstrating, are prematurely expending their power to reach the conscience. But where looks are used to save words, it will be found that words, when they are needed, will save still harsher measures. The calm, quiet, regretful, but firm, steady, piercing eye of reproof is likelier than a torrent of verbal rebukes to induce obedience, while the obedience thus gained will be more willing and cheerful. The knowledge that there are other means to fall back upon, will enable that gentle dignified composure, which is so requisite for the training of the young; and the consequently unassumed but unmistakable air of serene authority will have its ready effect on the child. Coming years may cause the hardening influences of life to tell upon the heart; and when looks are no longer sufficient to control, there will be the more meaning and weight in the words previously restrained, and still used as sparingly as can be. At first the gentle hint, then the mild but earnest appeal, then the

solemn and urgent expostulation ; but never, never, the fierce and passionate upbraiding ; for where the mouth is "opened with wisdom," there will also on the tongue be "the law of kindness."

5. Refrain to the utmost from delegating your authority. In cases seemingly incorrigible, a final power is wisely vested in the superintendents of our schools, to whom, under such circumstances, an appeal is made by the baffled teacher. But there is a danger lest the slothful or the self-distrustful should call in this foreign aid on slight occasions. Nothing short of imperative necessity should justify the step. As an ordinary rule, it may be laid down, that where authority needs thus to be upheld, it is an authority little better than a name. That monarch holds his dominions the most securely, who, in time of invasion or insurrection, is under no obligation to summon auxiliary forces.

6. Avoid all that is rude or discourteous in your treatment of the children. Deal with each of them as a rational and accountable human being. Never be overbearing, dictatorial, or impatient. Do not approach your work as if it were a condescension. The sunlight streams upon the lowliest roof with as genial a glow as on the wide-stretching palace-battlements. Though your charge be young, though they be poor, treat them with genuine politeness. You

will thus awaken in them that feeling of proper self-respect which helps to brace the mind for virtuous effort, but which is often all but crushed out of the heart amid the degrading scenes or rough usages of homes that are unchristian and unrefined. Mutual respect will also be promoted. The children will become considerate and attentive to their classmates. Kindliness of feeling will be cherished, and the moral tone of the class elevated and strengthened.

7. Remember that authority is not dependent on loudness of tone, any more than on imperiousness of manner. A clear, distinct, unwavering enunciation is all that is needed. The voice may be hushed almost to a whisper, and yet may tell of a determinateness that will brook neither heedless trifling nor open resistance. The comfort and welfare of each class is in great measure linked with the order and quietude that prevail in the class adjoining. "One disorderly teacher"—we quote from a religious periodical—"one disorderly teacher or class will derange the whole school, and turn a paradise into a Babel. If every teacher will see to the quietness of his own class, the whole school will be hushed to silence." If the teacher speaks loud, so will his pupils. If he would have them speak gently, he must modulate his own accents.

One thing, which greatly tends to promote or-

der, is early attendance. When the children have free access to the room, with none, or but one, perhaps, to control them, for half-an-hour or more before the school begins, they will surely get into mischief. The presence of a goodly band of teachers, who come not for the purpose of watching them, but in order to work with their respective classes, might do much to keep the thing in check. We have expressly abstained from making any remarks about punctuality. We have proceeded on the assumption that any comment of the kind ought to be superfluous. The zealous, the true-hearted—if time is at their own disposal, and if their scholars are able to meet them early—will be found in their place, not at but before the appointed hour. Much that is mechanical may thus be transacted in advance; as the exchange of tickets and library books. In the morning, there may be kind and earnest inquiries as to the children's health and friends, pursuits and prospects. In the afternoon, there may be a hearing of lessons unsaid by non-attendants in the morning; or an answering of questions on any text or texts proposed by the young inquirers; or an examining and commenting upon the proof-texts or written papers, that may have been handed in on the previous Sabbath. There is no lack of occupation for one who is in earnest. The children will set special store on extra time,

thus granted as a privilege to such as are willing to assemble and do extra work. The half hour so employed, will be for the children a better precursor and a surer pledge of a well-spent afternoon, than the boisterous and noisy sport of clambering over the benches, and racing about the room, to the disturbance of all who live within hearing-distance.

Finally, discipline must extend not only to the school-room, but to the place of worship. It may be a children's service, or it may be "the assembly of the saints" that is attended. In either case, the teachers have a duty to perform, more easy in respect of one than of the other, but in both cases alike indispensable. Usually it devolves on the teachers to be present in rotation, and those to whom the task is deputed have to see that perfect quietness is maintained. It would be unreasonable to expect that children of tender years—unreasonable to expect that an individual of any age—should sit through a single portion of the service, without moving a limb or relaxing a muscle. The very effort, nay, the very idea of such an effort, is enough to provoke restlessness even in the adult. All we can require is, first, that every movement should be subdued, gentle, noiseless; and, secondly, that the attention of a neighbor should never be attracted by look, or smile, or

whisper. Let a violation of either of these requirements be instantly reproofed. Let the reproof consist in a glance of the eye; in a very gentle, though firm touch with the hand; in an expressive uplifting of the finger to the lips; in a quiet displacing of such as encourage each other to talk and laugh; or in any mode that is at once undisturbing and yet unmistakable. But never let the reproof clothe itself in words, *while* the service is proceeding. The teacher's muttered expostulation, or his half-vociferated "Hush," when it falls upon the ear of a fellow-worshiper, may prove quite as distracting as the soft whisperings of the little offender; and if the monitor give himself this unnecessary license to speak, the children will see no cause why the liberty should be denied to them. Quietness toward the children will best call forth quietness from them.

Words, it is true, must do their part; but they must be spoken in due season. This, indeed, is what too many teachers, perhaps, are apt to neglect. There are not a few, who seem to imagine that the training of our scholars to proper behavior in the house of God, is the work which they have only casually to perform—and that, oftentimes, with heavy heart and weary frame—when it is their turn to take supervision of the free seats or children's gallery. Yet so it ought

not to be. Discipline would be an easier task, if instruction did its proper work. It is with his own class that each should deal in this matter. The children should be well *taught* as to the reasons why they should reverence the sanctuary, as to the deportment which befits the season and the place of holy worship, as to the zeal and love with which we should wait on God's ordinances, and as to the thirsting of soul with which even a little child may draw its portion out of the wells of salvation. They should be examined every Sunday afternoon in reference to what they have understood or remembered of prayer, or hymn, or sermon, in the morning. Then will one after another gradually learn this more excellent way ; and if the heaven is at work in each class, the teachers who are set to keep order over the entire school, will soon find little left for them to do. The new scholars will still have to be taken in hand, and some few refractory spirits may give occasional trouble ; but attentiveness will be the rule, and disorderly conduct the exception. Won rather than compelled to quietude, urged to a reasonable, instead of a merely mechanical service, they will learn to take delight in the exercise.

In this, as in every other branch of it, our discipline must be not a forcing, but a constraining ; not a breaking, but a bending ; not a coer-

cion, but a persuasion. It must be instinct with tenderness and affection. It must give only such commands as in themselves "are not grievous." It must remember the frame and feelings of a child. It must lay upon the young and feeble no unnecessary burden. Its yoke must be easy. It must mingle compassion with admonition. It must learn to make allowance for the weakness of the flesh. It must even stretch out a helping-hand to aid in the performance of all that it enjoins. In a word, it must rule in the spirit and after the pattern of Christ.

"Lowly and meek in heart ! I see,
The art of governing like thee,
Is governing by love.'

CHAPTER III.

EFFORTS OUT OF SCHOOL.

OUR instruction should not be limited to the Sabbath or the school-room. It should be our aim to surround the children with a more constant influence. There must be a hallowed ingenuity in devising expedients for their welfare. In this, every one must be guided by the leisure he has at command, and the facilities he has within reach. Some can do more than others in the way of extra effort. Sometimes exertions of this kind are of a social character, such as the establishment of evening-schools, writing-classes, &c., in which the teachers take their turn of attendance, and thus the burden presses less heavily on each.

But it is on private effort that we deem it more needful to dwell. The teacher who has a comfortable home of his own, may gather his class around him, for an occasional hour of cheerful intercourse, when conversation can take a freer range than he can allow to it amid the restrictions and routine-work of set hours and sacred instruction. He may talk to the

boys, and may set them talking. He may skillfully draw forth remarks from one and another on the subject with which each is most familiar, and may thus render them mutual instructors. He may seek to add to their general store of ideas. He may describe mechanical inventions, or give simple demonstrations of scientific laws. He may give them a notion of what is going on in this wide world of ours, and he will make every fact directly or indirectly convey a moral teaching. He will speak of our country's politics, and fire their patriotism. He will advert to what is passing in foreign lands, and enlarge their sympathies. If a startling crime has arrested public attention, he will portray the vice in such a light, and set it to view from such a safe distance, that "to be hated" it needs "but to be seen;" and this he will do by hinting at its debasement, its deformity, the blight it brings on the character, and the stain it leaves on the conscience. Or if a touching incident has been detailed in the daily journals, its particulars will be given in their freshness. Thus it will be shown, by example, how the Christian, in reading even the public newspaper, extracts from it what may serve to confirm his trust in God's providence, to heighten his interest in human welfare, and to strengthen his aspirations after all that is lovely and of good report. Without

one sermonizing word, there will be an embodied homily in this practical setting forth of the way in which a holy mind can turn every thing to profit. Not only will the children feel that they are inhaling a moral atmosphere purer than that which they ordinarily breathe, but they may possibly be convinced, for the time at least, that a holier is a higher atmosphere.

The teacher, though he cannot sanctify the heart, can do much to refine the mind. True, if conversion follow not, the habitation thus swept and garnished will still be the palace of that "strong man armed" who is the foe alike of heaven and earth. Yet this is no valid argument against the cleansing and the adorning. Though mere outward morality cannot save the soul, or recommend it to God's favor, it has, undeniably, a value of its own, and a proper estimation in the eyes of men. We ought not to undervalue it, because we cannot be content to see it stand alone. As the thoughts, so also the tastes may be refined. The love of literature, as well as the love of science, may be fostered. Knowing how nearly the vulgar is allied to the profane, the instructor will seek to enlist admiration on behalf of what is best and noblest. Instead of ministering to, and thus fostering, a taste for what is low, he will seek to create a healthful appetite for what is excellent and approved. If

they show a liking for poetry, he will not, after the foolish fashion which has come into vogue, meet them at every turn with some doggerel rhymes of his own composing, but selecting from our noblest bards simple and suitable specimens, adapted to their comprehension, he will do justice to the beauty of the verse by the emphasis with which he reads, or the aptness with which he comments. Evenings thus spent, in various but profitable engagements, will leave on the memory an abiding impression, which, so far as it goes, will be an impress for good. It need not be feared that any such exercises will tend, as the children grow older, to make them discontented with their station in life, or unfitted to discharge its duties. Such a spirit is the concomitant of a bad, rather than of a good taste. Those who have acquired a perception of what is truly great, will have learned to see that "the mind is its own place," and that it can invest the meanest employment with associations that are dignified and ennobling. The comparative seldomness of such meetings, the variety of topics advanced, and the unsystematic way in which these are handled, will guarantee that the knowledge thus imparted shall not be such as puffeth up. All we do is to take our pupils by the hand, lead them within the portals of Learning's spacious temple, indicate to them its

several departments, and fill their minds with an idea of its extent and its magnificence, its exceeding wondrousness and its surpassing beauty; but we make no attempt to enroll them among the initiated in its mysteries. We would fain open to their mental vision the boundless wonders of nature and of art; we would set them inquiring into aught of interest that crosses their path; we would train them to "discern things that differ," and to award the preference where it is justly due. If in all this we succeed, we shall so send them forth with wakeful, watchful minds, that if, by God's grace, they become men of piety, they will be Christians whose good cannot be evil spoken of by its being imputed to intellectual weakness, to misguided ignorance, or to narrow-minded prejudice.

For younger children, if they are similarly gathered, there must necessarily be an eye to more amusement. Instructive games and suggestive pictures may be resorted to; and any thing which will at the same time enliven and expand the mind. In every case, the meeting should be closed by a word or two of directly religious reference. It will not be difficult so to deduce this from the prominent themes of the evening, as indissolubly to link the remembrance of the one with the retrospect of the other. Like our Lord, who, from the water of Samaria's

well, could make an easy transition to those better supplies of divine grace, which were his to offer, we shall be able, if we are but spiritually-minded, to connect the earthly with the heavenly, by many an unstrained analogy, many an unforced turn. A few words, appropriately introduced, will tell more powerfully than an array of apophthegms, very wise in themselves, but wholly disconnected with all that had gone before.

There are some teachers, however, who could not make such a plan as the foregoing compatible with domestic arrangements; and others, who have not the easy conversational talent, which alone can make the experiment successful. Yet even such have a sphere wherein to labor. They can do much by setting the children to work at home. They can induce them to search and to think. They can originate attractive schemes for alluring them to study. These will be graduated according to the children's age and intellectual standing. Sometimes a question will be put for investigation during the week; thus:—

A good man once said that a whole psalm, a whole chapter, and a whole epistle, are written in praise of brotherly love. Will you find out which psalm, which chapter, and which epistle? and how many verses in each?

Classes more advanced may have question-papers on which to prepare written answers. These may be—

Historical, such as, Write a life of Abraham ; of David, &c. Trace all the providences in the history of Moses ; or of Joseph. What was the character of Josiah ? or else, Josiah was tender-hearted ; what incidents in his history prove it ?—*Doctrinal*, such as, What is adoption ? what is justification ? &c.—Or *Polemical*, such as, Why are you not a heathen ? a Jew ? an infidel ? a Romanist ? &c.

The finding of proof-texts is a method very commonly resorted to. But let this be discriminatingly done. When the subject is easy, and the children's judgments are well trained, they may be left free to select their proofs from any portion of Holy Writ, where they can find one which they think applicable.

When the subject is more difficult, or the children's faculty of discernment still lies dormant, it will often be better that a guide be furnished them. Proof-papers may be drawn out, containing a list of the chapters, in each of which they may find one or more verses that answer to the given theme. As a ground-work for a serial course of proofs, it might not be amiss to take Keach's excellent catechism. From the outline, the teacher secures an order and progressiveness that are invaluable.

ture-portion which has been explained to them. What he really understands, a child of ordinary intelligence will be capable of expressing in words of his own. The young and the poor, if they have seized an idea, can give better expression to it, than those who are older and more outwardly privileged, but whose inward perception of truth is more clouded. Style and orthography should not be criticized ; since this might check the freedom with which your pupils write. Your object is merely to ascertain the clearness and correctness of their notions. Any extra pains you think it fit to take with them at other times, for the set purpose of teaching them to spell, and so forth, will be an advantage to them ; but let it be a separate exercise, with that express purpose in view. Limit your attention in their biblical exercises to the scriptural theme, and to that alone.

The preparation of question papers and proof-lists will entail on the teacher some amount of labor ; but it will be labor well-spent. The mere fact of such manifest painstaking will indicate to the children that you think of them during the week's interval of absence ; and the self-imposing of duties, which are not included in the regular order of school-work, will prove that your heart is in the matter.

But whether the above, or similar plans, can

be adopted by you or not, you must by no means neglect private and personal epistolary teaching. It is thus, that you have it in your power to deal with your scholars individually, while in school-hours you instruct them collectively. It is by letter that you can most pointedly address their consciences, most powerfully awaken their sense of responsibility, and most permanently set the truth before their minds. The words we speak may be soon forgotten ; the letters we write may be preserved, and read again at some distant date, under some such new circumstance as shall add to them a weight and power not their own. Write to each member of your class, then as occasion serves ; or if no opportunity offers, make one. Write to them when you are absent from home. Write, when providential dispensations are chequering their family-history. Write when you happen to know a birthday is about to recur. Write, when you give them a book. Write, when you see indications of aught that is hopeful. Write, when you have reason to fear that things are going wrong. Write freely and faithfully. Write tenderly and affectionately. Write again and again. You may begin this, long before you can expect an answer in return. You may write a letter in printed characters, if the written forms are yet unfamiliar to the eye. Write at any time, and in any mode, but *begin*

early. If possible, let the first letter the children in your class receive be one written by yourself. A first letter! There is a charm in it to all, but peculiarly so to the young. Do not neglect to avail yourself of the eagerness with which a child hails the earliest note that bears his name on its address. If you have been the first to awaken in any this pleasurable thrill, all the letters you afterward write to those children, are likely to shine in the reflected light of that early joy. And if God's Holy Spirit bless one or other of your missives to the saving of their souls, there will be another, and yet more heart-stirring remembrances of what your hand has penned. Like Henry Randall, of whom we read in "English Hearts and English Hands," they will be ready to express the wish, that such letter may be buried with them, and that they may rise up with it in their hand on the resurrection-day—not, indeed, as if attaching to it the value of a passport to heaven, like the written absolution which the Greek priest places in the hands of the departed, but simply as cherishing, with intensity of affection, that which was made the means of leading their feet into the way of salvation, the way of holiness, the way of peace.

As soon as possible, you should induce your young correspondents to write in reply. Ask easy questions first. If you are writing on the

importance of prayer, ask whether they find it a difficult thing; and if difficult, whether it is from not knowing what to say, or from not knowing how to say it. Frame your questions, so as to lead them to look within, but yet not so as to involve them in the temptation of pretending or professing to be or to feel more than they really are, or actually experience. Let all that they write to you be kept under the strictest seal of confidence. If one in your class has been removed by death, you will naturally advert to the event by way of solemn improvement; and if the one, thus taken, has left evidence, so far as man can judge, of preparedness for glory, you will wish to adduce particulars by way of example and encouragement. But it is better that you should restrict yourself to the messages they gave you for the class, and to the sentiments, which, in life and death, *others* have gathered from their lips. What they have breathed into your ear, or written for your eye, you ought not to communicate. To reveal it, would involve two dangers in respect to those that survive. It would check confidence in the diffident and retiring; it would encourage dissimulation, if any were hypocritically inclined. Some would tell you less of what they feel; others might tell it you less truly. The harm done would be far greater than the good designed. Let your efforts not only be constant, but let them be wise.

PART IV.

THE TEACHER'S RELATIVE DUTIES.



CHAPTER I.

TO THE CHILDREN.

IN all his labors, whether in the school or out of it, a teacher must bear in mind the great purpose of his mission. He has not only to "testify," but to "exhort." His object is not to cram the intellect with a dead weight of instruction, but to enforce upon the heart a right application of the knowledge imparted. He has to be to his pupils not only, as we have seen, their instructor and their ruler, but also their spiritual guide, their temporal adviser, and their life-long friend.

1. He is to be their *spiritual guide*. As such, he cannot be content to place the Bible in their hands; but he seeks to convince them that all it says is true, true in itself, and true for them. Nor is he content to lay bare to their view the

mere surface of Scripture, but he urges them to dig deep for the "treasures hid in the field." He deems it not enough that Christ be revealed *to* them, but with earnest longing he desires to see Christ formed *in* them. This intense anxiety for their souls' welfare stamps itself on all his thoughts and words. It makes him the unwearied "evangelist." He feels that to him is committed "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." Whatever else he may fail to teach, this he dares not neglect. It is the hinge on which all his lessons turn. Sin and salvation, faith and repentance, are the four cardinal ideas which regulate the bearing of his every collateral remark. Sin and salvation; these will be the shade and light, which will intermingle with perpetual alternation in each part of his every study. He will not always be giving a systematic round of gospel-doctrine; but he will let every thing lead him to the exhibition of gospel-truth. Every allusion to faults easily committed, or virtues hard to be attained, helps to prove the need of a Saviour. And as every type in the Mosaic institute pointed forward to the Messiah, so will each lesson from Sacred Writ be now found pointing us back to "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world"—each lesson, that is to say, if it be rightly interpreted and developed. If we fail to apprehend its sense,

or to discern its fullness, the richest promise of the new covenant will be no evangel in our hands; but if we catch its meaning, and search into its mysteries, the darkest shadow of the older dispensation will become as a pillar of fire from the reflected glow of the Sun of Righteousness. "One man," it has been well said, "may preach 'Christ crucified' in treating of the baptism of Jesus, while another shall fail to do so even when treating of the crucifixion."

Faith and repentance:—these also will be themes ever on the lips of the Sunday-school teacher. A gospel faith he will commend, a faith that looks away from self, and looks to none but Jesus—a faith that disclaims all personal merit, and seeks acceptance in and through the Saviour alone. A gospel-repentance he will inculcate, a repentance that needeth not to be repented of, a repentance that flows from recognition of the Crucified One, a repentance that mourns over sin as that which caused the Saviour to suffer and to die. Personal and all-pervading is the faith he will urge; such as that so clearly described by the late Mrs. Coutts, "God gives, I receive; God offers, I accept; God invites, I comply; God speaks, I listen; God threatens, I tremble; God promises, I rejoice, and plead his word; God commands, I obey." Comprehensive and complete is the repentance

he will enforce ; a repentance that consists in sorrow unfeigned, confession undissembled, renunciation unreserved ; a repentance that “ includes a heart broken *from* sin as well as a heart broken *for* sin.” The wounded spirit will be directed to the “ balm in Gilead ;” and those who have been made whole will be bid to “ go and sin no more.” The penitent will be directed to the cross of Christ ; the pardoned will have their attention drawn to his example.

As a spiritual adviser, you will be found visiting the children at their homes. In seasons of sickness, you will, if compatible with other duties, make a point of hastening to their bedside, not to weary them with ill-timed remarks that are unsuited to their condition of pain or feebleness,—not to ply them, for your own satisfaction, with searching questions, which, if needful to be put, should have been asked before ; but to do figuratively what the Romish priest at such a time would literally do—to hold the cross in view. At each visit, you may drop a short sentence from the book of inspiration that may dwell upon the memory, and may, under the divine blessing, work in the stillness of that sick room a saving and peace-speaking effect. At one time, the words will have reference to him, who, having suffered in our nature, can feel for us amid our sharpest endurances ; and at another time, to the

fact that he who died for us has taken away for all believers the fear and the sting of death. Now and then a few words of prayer may be offered, but always *very few*, and always pertinent, asking for recovery to health, for patience to endure, or for light in the dark valley, as the patient's state of body and of mind may indicate to be most adapted to the case. In seasons of convalescence, there will be a call for closer appeal. Then will be the time to elicit gratitude for God's sparing mercy; the time to press a close self-scrutiny as to preparedness for death; the time to show that a reprieve is not an exemption, and that the stroke of mortality is but postponed; the time to urge that they listen to the warning voice which has spoken in their late peril and their wondrous escape: the time to plead for their immediate consecration of themselves to the service of him, who, having remembered them in their low estate, has granted them a new period of earthly existence. In seasons of health, your visits may be less frequent, but should not be discontinued. Absenteeism should always find you bending your steps toward the truant's home, to learn the cause. But you need not wait for such excuse. If you have gained the children's love, you may go without any errand save that of kindly interest. You will, by such unexpected visits, gain an

insight into their position, their employments, their temptations, their advantages, and their associations; and this knowledge will place you on a vantage-ground, whence you can more effectively utter your words of counsel.

2. The teacher should show himself willing to be a *temporal adviser*. A due interest in the outward welfare of our scholars is important as a proof that our care for their souls is genuine, and earnest, and reasonable. The seen and the temporal weigh with them, as yet, more than the unseen and the eternal; if we sympathise with them in a right attention to the former, we give an appreciable proof of our friendship, which wins us a readier hearing when we would lead them on to matters of higher moment. "Thenceforth I began to love him," says Augustine, in making mention of Ambrose, "not at first, indeed, as a teacher of the truth, but as a man who took a kind interest in me." Act on the principle hereby suggested. Let your scholars have proof that you care for their well-being in time, and they will better understand your solicitude about their welfare for eternity. Let them see that you care for their bodily health, and the value you set on the health of their souls will less probably appear to them a thing unnatural or mysterious. Of whom is it the poet testifies, that "Truth from his lips

prevailed with double sway?" It was one of whom he could further tell us:—

“Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown to share the good man’s smile;
His ready smile a parent’s warmth expressed,
Their welfare pleased him, and their griefs distressed.”

Sympathy, like a master-key, will often unlock the heart, whose wards would be fruitlessly plied with learning or with logic. Teach children eloquently, and you leave only such an impression of wondering awe as makes you appear like a being from some distant sphere. Teach them feelingly, and you awaken that sense of love which draws you at once closely and strongly to their heart. True sympathy, be it remembered, is a thing of varied manifestation. It is not confined to the house of mourning. It has an answering echo to the song of joy. It spurns not the tiniest thing that can awaken the gladness or the grief of a fellow-being. Your scholars’ pleasures may seem trivial, and their crosses light, in comparison with those you now experience; but, remembering how slight the occasions which caused the smiles and tears of your own childhood’s April-day, you will be ready to rejoice when a child rejoices, and to enter into the grief when a child finds cause to weep.

Again, this manifestation of interest in the temporal good of our pupils is important, as establishing in their minds the necessary connection which should subsist between "things secular" and "things sacred." Separate the two, by giving your heed exclusively to the latter, and you go far to strengthen the too prevalent notion that religion is a thing apart from daily life, if not antagonistic to it. On the other hand, show more care for the dying than for the undying part of their nature, and you encourage their natural preference of earthly to celestial bliss. But pay a due, that is, a proportionate consideration to each, and you may thus do much to instill the idea, that Christ is the Saviour of the body as well as of the soul; that Christianity lays its hallowing touch on our entire nature; that godliness has the promise of this life as well as of that which is to come; and that the sacred, instead of ignoring the secular, is designed to permeate and sanctify it.

With very young children, there will be less scope for giving such advice as that of which we treat. Your object with them must mainly be to foster their home-affections, quicken them to the performance of their home-duties, and give them any hint that will aid them amid the little 'ups and downs' that are not unknown even in their young life. When they are communicative,

listen to their prattle for awhile, checking it only when it goes on too long, or leads too far astray from the point whence it took its start. Turn all that they tell you to some good account, either laying it up, as did Mary of old, to ponder it as an indication of character, or else making it at once a foundation for some practical remark, cheerfully, and therefore, pleasantly advanced.

More definite must be your acts of friendship, as the children, growing older, have to take their first start in life. This, with the poor, is necessarily at a very early age; and in our scripture-classes, there will always be many who have begun to labor for the meat which perisheth. This first launching is often a crisis; a step, on which depends much of the happiness or the misery, and frequently much of the virtue or the vice of after years. The measure and mode of a teacher's assistance must depend on his position and resources. If you can draw your purse-strings, pecuniary aid will be of service in a boy's equipment. If you can use influence, your recommendation may secure his entrance into a Christian family. If you are compelled to say, "Silver and gold have I none," be sure you add, "such as I have, give I thee." If you can do nothing toward procuring him a situation, you may aid him to fill it with credit. You may tell him what were your feelings at the time of

your apprenticeship, what the advice which you then received, or which you would have been the better for receiving, what the snares which encompassed your feet, and what the means whereby you escaped entanglement. You may guard him against that fickle and restlessly-aspiring spirit, which, by ever aiming at what is higher, often loses its grasp of a smaller but surer gain. You may cherish in him that stability of character and of purpose, which best conduces to respectability, honor, and success. As soon as children begin to earn money of their own, it is time to teach them useful lessons as to their responsibility, reminding them that cents, no less than dollars, are a trust for which they are answerable to God. Take the opportunity, before the love of money has struck its evil-bearing root in their heart, to give them an idea as to the laws of spending and saving. Teach them neither to hoard nor to waste. Teach them to be just before they are generous. Remind them of the duties they owe in this matter to themselves, to their relatives, and to the cause of God.

3. The teacher should be a *life-long friend*. If removed to a distance from his former charge, or if one after another of them is transferred from beneath his care, he should endeavor still to keep his eye on them all. Change of residence among

the poor is not only so frequent, but often so sudden, that children, in our elementary classes especially, may be easily and irrecoverably lost sight of. The older ones will probably have heard and understood more about the family-plans, and may be aware of the intended "fitting" before the actual time of their removal. In such cases, if the teacher has been sufficiently careful in reiterating his wish to this effect, he will most likely be told, either where the new house is to be, or where the address will be procurable. The cheap rate of postage will enable him to keep up an interchange of thought, more or less frequent, with those who have been parted from his little flock. At all events, teacher and scholar will both feel that they *can* write, whensoever impulse may lead the one, or anxiety incite the other, to take up the pen. Let us not forget the record, that Jesus, "having loved his own which were in the world, loved them unto the end." Those for whom we have cared, and toiled, and prayed, should be—to the very close of their life or of ours—the objects of our undiminished affection, our unabated efforts, and our unceasing supplications.

CHAPTER II

TO THE CHILDREN'S PARENTS.

THE minister, who aims at usefulness, must remember those who are beyond the circle of his flock ; and the teacher, if he would prosper in his work, must not be neglectful of those, who, while they are "without" the school-room, are not unconnected with it. In his visitation of the children's homes, he will meet their parents or other guardians ; and they also should share his notice. An observation of their habits, their temper, their mode of life, will assist him in judging of the influences under which his pupils spend more than six-sevenths of their time. He will ascertain what extra weight he needs to throw into the scale. Where he detects untruthfulness in a mother's word, he will speak more plainly than ever to his class on the evils of falsehood and duplicity. When he finds a father addicted to drunkenness, he will lose no opportunity which the Sabbath lessons give him for insisting on the duty of temperance. When, from a parent's angry voice, he ascertains that a boy is exposed to harsh treatment at home, he will

cease to wonder at the child's obduracy, and will strive more than ever to draw him with the unaccustomed cords of kindness. Where he finds, on the other hand, that foolish indulgence has spared the rod, he will see the necessity of using stronger measures to teach the great lesson of obedience.

But it is not enough for the teacher to neutralize the home-influence, where it is injurious. He must seek to infuse into it a new principle. He must draw the parents into consultation with himself as to the plans that may subserve their children's welfare. He must give them credit for feeling an interest in the topic. He must convince them that nothing is further from his wishes than to assume their duties, or put himself in their stead. He must assure them of his consciousness that he fills the post, not of their substitute, but of their friend and helper. He can at times more or less openly hint how far the Sunday training and that of the week-day, are not quite in harmony, and can ask whether an assimilation may not yet be effected. He can suggest the reading of a short chapter and prayer by the father or mother, morning or evening, in the family, as a tribute of reverence due to God and to his word. He can lend or give them suitable works on parental duty. He can invite them to a "Fathers' Meeting,"

or a "Maternal Association," if such there is in the neighborhood. In every way, he must try to arouse their sense of parental accountability, and aid them in the discharge of parental duty. The benefit will not only be a transmitted one, that will light upon the children, but often a personal one, that will rest on the parents themselves. They, as well as their son or their daughter, may "call" the teacher "blessed." A father or a mother, by thus coming within the range of our interest and our prayers, may, through the imparted grace of God, be born from above, and become not merely a judicious, but a Christian parent.

Some few among them, perhaps, are already disciples of the Lord Jesus. From such, the teacher will have a right to expect cordial co-operation. He will feel it no small encouragement to be assured that while he is laboring, a parent is praying on his behalf, and that when the school is dismissed, the lesson will be enforced by exhortation and example in a godly home. It is true, that where the father and mother are mere professors, they may possibly be found sending their boys and girls to the school for appearance' sake, while any special effort on the instructors' part to make a personal appeal to one or other of their children, will be resented as an insult, and looked upon as an implied accusa-

tion of remissness in themselves. For such cases the teacher should not be unprepared, though, happily, he will find them few. As a general rule, the presence in a Sunday-school class of those who belong to professedly pious households, is a presumptive argument that such children are the objects of a parental anxiety, which will second a teacher's endeavors, and which will rejoice in the success that may attend them. As Deborah urged Barak to the charge against Sisera, and as Barak in reply entreated that she also would go in person to the encampment, so should the teacher and the Christian parent blend their exertions, without a shade of jealousy or mutual distrust.

Our visitation of the parents should not be at fixed intervals, else we shall fail to see the children's homes as they really are. It should not be too frequent, else we may weary them by our oft-repeated coming. It should not be intrusive. If we find that the family have friends with them, nothing short of an invitation so irresistibly pressing that it cannot be a mere compliment, should induce us to sit down; and even then we should stay for the few moments only that will avail to show our sense of the hearty welcome. We must remember that courtesy is due from us as well as from them, and that the family-gatherings of the poor are too brief, and too far

apart, to admit of their unseasonable and unreasonable interruption by a stranger's presence. We must not intrude on business, any more than on pleasure. If the father has to leave his handicraft, or the mother her wash-tub, you must not tarry to be a hindrance to such needful avocations ; but if the former, while prosecuting his labor, or the latter, while standing at her ironing-board, invites you in to talk the while, your visit will be deemed a pleasure instead of a hindrance. It is the word, "spoken in due season," which is inestimably precious. Speak, on the contrary, when your hearers are wishing you had the good sense to go away, and your utterances will surely be in vain. Finally, our visits must not be formal. They must not bear the aspect of a thing done simply as part of a routine. A duty without heart will be a duty without life. Only as we go with a deep sense on our minds of the reality there is in our work, can we leave the same feeling on the minds of those we visit.

When the parents are in destitution, it will hardly be right that we should always go empty handed. There are few teachers, who, if they cannot render pecuniary aid, are precluded from all means of obtaining the power to dispense it ; and fewer still, if any, who have not the desire to "draw out their souls to the hungry." The

only difficulty is in respect to the discretion which it will be needful to exercise. We read in fable of the bulfinch that found no voice to tell its wants, but pined away in neglect, and died of starvation, while the raven in an adjoining cage screamed, and screamed again, and still screamed on, while yet it knew no lack of food. It is not always the most complaining who are most pinched with poverty. Hence our main difficulty is to find out—not who are the non-deserving, for that may not always serve us as a rule—but who are the really necessitous. The seemingly poorest may be the miserly and grasping; the seemingly thrifty and prosperous may have a hard struggle to keep things in neat array. A thoroughly comprehensive, practical work, on the difficult duty of private almsgiving, seems still a thing to be desired. The Sunday-school teacher has especial need to study the matter well; lest, by too frequent liberality, he foster that dependent, cringing, mercenary spirit, which is the bane of many a town and village in our land; or lest, by too great parsimony, he incur the reproach that justly falls on those who say to the needy, “Be ye warmed, and be ye filled,” yet “give them not those things which are needful to the body.” James ii. 15–17. 1 John iii. 17. Luke vi. 30–35.

CHAPTER III.

TO FELLOW-TEACHERS AND FELLOW-CHRISTIANS.

THE laborer in our schools is not an isolated worker, and must not act as such. On entering his name among an associated band, he virtually pledges himself to abide by the laws and adhere to the decisions of the fraternity. Private judgment he may exercise, and also express. At the business-meetings, he should speak and act freely and fearlessly. But even in this he must refrain from giving way to personal interest or individual caprice. He is not to give his opinion, or his vote, as he fancies best for his own class, separately considered; but must learn to take that enlarged view which comprehends the entire school within its range. If out-voted he should cede his wishes in compliance with the desire so clearly expressed by the majority. If he can show cause why his class should be excepted, let him gain an exemption if he can; but let him submit, if this privilege be not accorded. That conscience should ever forbid his acquiescence is a supposition almost too extravagant to demand notice; yet, if the course

proposed should prove to be one that a man honestly believes, not inexpedient alone, but absolutely sinful, there is but one thing for him to do. He is not to stay at his post, and pursue a self-willed course, in an irritated and irritating spirit; but he must quietly, not pettishly, withdraw, and labor thenceforth as an individual, or in conjunction with some other band of teachers, more like-minded with himself. Such an extreme case will hardly ever occur; for where a grave question of absolute right or wrong comes to be decided by a large body of earnest Christian men, such as our teachers ought to be, and we trust mostly are, it is more than improbable that they will pass a measure which is clearly and indisputably evil.'

There are sometimes, however, decisions which are exceedingly questionable. When a plan appears to you of doubtful wisdom, hold your opinion in abeyance. Watch the working of the system. Try to fortify your argument by tangible proofs. You may try to win others to your way of thinking, provided that you do so in no spirit of dictatorship, but of persuasion; and provided you reason the matter with the officers and more influential teachers, rather than sow discord by exciting the juniors against those who are their elders in age and position, or by stirring up the disaffected to the forming of a schism or a breach.

In the meanwhile, pay obedience to the existing laws. The rules once made, you have individually nothing to do with them, but to seek redress in all prudent and peaceable ways, and, while awaiting this, to render such an obedience as shall go far to obviate the injurious effects you apprehend. A few practical examples may be of use. We give not here our opinion as to any of the adduced instances. Some of the plans are wise, and some unwise. We merely seek to show how, in each case, the teacher should make the best of what he, or she, deems bad.

1. Mr. L. does not think the sale of books lawful on the Sabbath. The question is in agitation; but the books are still sold, and no provision is made for their being otherwise obtained. He yields to the urgency of the case; but he tries to counteract the evil. He often explains to his class the cause of its permission, for the time being; tells them it would never be allowed, if some did not regard it as a work of necessity and mercy; reminds them that no gain arises to the school-funds from this traffic; and thus he seeks to invalidate the conclusion they might be ready to draw, as to the lawfulness of Sunday-purchases in general.

2. Mrs. M. does not approve of the afternoon addresses. She would fain have that extra time to devote to her own class. Had she a separate

room to herself, she might be at liberty to retain her scholars. But her post is in the school-room, and thus the matter is in nowise at her option. The general opinion of the teachers is that the welfare of the school is subserved by the plan, inasmuch as classes, that have less able teachers, may share this advantage with the rest. Clearly, Mrs. M. should let private bend to public good. However much she may despise the exercise, she should not absent herself from it; nor should she show that lack of interest in it, which will lead her scholars to despise it too. She should not only be present, but she should encourage her class to listen, by making occasional reference to it, on the Sunday following. If she tries, she can find a streak of light on which to fix her gaze. If she does not scorn to take honey from what she deems a lion's carcass, she can find nourishment, for herself and others, where she least expects it.

3. Mr. N. objects to the question book, and prefers choosing his own theme. He says, that none can teach another person's system; but he forgets that this is different from teaching on another person's subject. In following out his own scheme, it is true that he does not interfere with the peace of the school; but he certainly prevents the harmoniousness of the combined instruction. He is not a Bible-class teacher: if

he were, his laboring, in a measure, apart from the school, might exempt him from literally working with it, and the attainments of his scholars might necessitate more elaboration of plan, and more continuity as to series. Not so, in the present case. Our friend's class will have to join in the monthly examination; and for this he should prepare them. Let him remember, that "good workmen never complain of their tools;" they may prefer their own, and may, possibly, be right in considering them of superior quality, but they will show the master-hand in the dexterity with which they wield any that you offer for their use. The truth is, that Mr. N. is young. When age and experience have scattered gray hairs upon his head, he will, no doubt, acknowledge that what the one may chance to like best, is not always that which, for the many, would work best. In the meantime, let him be persuaded to submit to a discipline, which will do him more good than he imagines; and, debarred from originality in the selection, let him display it in the treatment of his theme.

4. Miss O. objects to having her scholars moved into higher classes. She has sown, and she wishes to reap. She is unwilling that others should enter into her labors. She is told that the children may be advantaged by such a change, since those who grow up beneath one training.

for years together, are apt to become one-sided in their views. She is reminded that what good they have derived from her instruction and discipline, they may be the means of disseminating, if they mix with classes that have been less wisely managed. But no reasoning, however complimentary, has convinced her. Having gained insight into their character, and acquired a hold on their affections, she does not like to lose this vantage ground. Some of them appear in a hopeful state, and she fears lest they should lose the impression so recently made. What is she to do? Let her use every persuasive plea that may gain her the indulgence she craves; but if the order of the school peremptorily demands the change, let her reconcile herself to it. Let her keep her eye on her old scholars; let her work for them still, as occasion may allow; and let her rejoice that they have now another friend to ply them with additional efforts, and to offer for them additional prayers. Let her remember that "to wish to be the one channel through which God's grace is perpetually communicated, would be to wish to fill the place of the Redeemer himself." Let her not, then, wish to have the youthful mind clinging to her for support, instead of cleaving firmly to the Rock of Ages.

5. Miss P. would not mind the occasional

removal of her scholars; but she regards the yearly rotation of teachers from class to class as injudicious. Yet such is the rule in the school she attends. We grant that her faith and patience are severely tried; but yet she may do something to mitigate the evil. Instead of listlessly complaining that the time is too short for any hope of usefulness, let its brevity stimulate her to increased diligence. The fewer her opportunities of speaking, the more let her make of them; and the fewer her words, the more weighty let them be. Let her compute Sabbath as added to Sabbath; let her reckon the hours of morning and afternoon teaching on all the Sundays of the year; let her reduce those hours to minutes, and those minutes to seconds; let her see that every minute, every second is well employed; and perhaps she may have cause to learn that a year's teaching, blessed by Heaven, can work a lifetime's good. Instead of thinking her influence curtailed by such a plan, let her remember that if shortened, it is widened; no longer confined to some seven or ten, for class after class, as years roll on, will be found hanging on her lips, as she explains the message of the cross.

Jealousy among fellow-teachers should always be avoided. Those who plant, and those who

water, will hereafter rejoice together in the harvest; let them learn even now to rejoice together in hope. In order to ensure their peace, let them cherish no foolish ideas of precedence. Let them not deem it a slight, if some one from a lower class than theirs is raised to a vacant post that is higher than their own, while they and their scholars are left undisturbed in the enjoyment of mutual confidence and love. Let them not act as if they thought the souls of the younger children less precious than those of the elder. We want in our Sunday-schools no heraldic punctiliousness, no marshaling to honorable dignities, no idle pomp of place. Promotion may be set before the children as a stimulus, since it marks and rewards their progress. But promotion among the teachers should never be a ground of envy. No one class should be deemed more honorable than another. Some teachers are better suited to infants, because they are lively; others to the senior class, because they have a larger stock of ready knowledge: but there is no class, high or low, that calls not for the best energies of the best instructor. Classes 1, 2, 3, should always be regarded as an index to the grade of capacity, not in the teacher, but in the taught. We should come to our work, prepared to take any place assigned us. To cavil at the arrangements

made, looks as if our own honor were dearer to us than that of our Lord.

Are any teachers discontented, because they see others raised to office, while they have no share in the important posts connected with school-management? Poor, paltry ambition this, which scarcely deserves the passing word even of refutation and censure! Truly such know not what they ask, nor what spirit they are of! They would fain clutch at a shadowy ideal glory, while they shut their eyes to the cares which such elevation must entail. Cares? Aye, manifold. An intimate acquaintance with the temperament of every teacher; a discriminating knowledge of the state of every class; a prompt discernment of times and seasons; a clear perception of what in each emergency his portion of the Sunday-school-Israel "ought to do;" a firm maintenance of law and order; a kind leniency when there arises what may justly be pronounced an exceptional case; an affable manner, and a peace-making spirit;—such are the qualifications needful for a Superintendent, and needful to some extent also for the Secretary and the Librarian. Who shall dare to arrogate to himself a claim of fitness for one or other of these responsible positions? Instead of murmuring, as if overlooked, the teacher who is non-elected may well be contented, and even

thankful, under a view of his own insufficiency, that in him has not been vested so momentous a trust. Moreover, if he loves his work, he will rejoice that he is left to prosecute the labor on which his affections are set. One who "magnifies his office," will feel it a matter of regret and self-sacrifice, when he is called to step aside, from positive engagement in the teaching-work, to the necessary but less interesting duty of tending the machinery which keeps the whole school in active and orderly operation.

There is an honor connected with the superintendent's office, but it is not such as the carnally-ambitious and the worldly-minded would be likely to attain. "Let the elders *that rule well* be counted worthy of 'double honor.'" It is "for their *work's* sake," not merely for their office's sake, that we are to esteem those "that are over us in the Lord." It is well to note the injunction that follows; "and be at peace among yourselves." A failure to render due homage to those in authority over us, is likely to endanger the steadfastness of our brotherly love toward those who labor with us. Our superintendents have every reason to claim our respect and our co-operation. Their difficulties are such as it is in the power of the several teachers greatly to aggravate, or well nigh to remove. Their work will be easy or perplexing, light or burdensome,

as they meet with cordial obedience, or with opposition open or smothered. It is a wise rule that you should be to your superintendents, what you wish your class should be to you,—respectful, loving, docile, pliant. Recollect that he knows not how to govern who knows not how to obey.

Rise a stage higher, and we have to ask, What is the relation between teacher and pastor? Never should it be that of rivalry. The individual teacher must learn to know his proper subordination. He must yield the esteem due to one who has the oversight over his soul. The teachers collectively must beware of fancying that they have a right to dictate the amount of service which the minister should render to the school. His visits should be welcomed, and their repetition urged; his absence should never be resented as a neglect, or attributed to an undervaluing of our work. His heart may be with us, when it is not in his power to give direct aid. His presiding at the teacher's meetings, whether for business, prayer, or preparation, should be regarded as optional. Welcome him as an occasional visitor, and he may be led to repeat the privilege so manifestly prized. Urge him to come regularly, and if he yields to your over-solicitations, you are likely to find that the many occasions on which the graver claims

of his office compel him to bend his steps elsewhere, will promote irregularity of attendance in the teachers.

The co-operation of deacons, and well-known Christian friends, should be appreciated. They may be invited to give their counsel, to bestow their contributions, and to remember the interests of the school in their prayers. They may be asked to look in from time to time, and inspect the schools which they aid in supporting. If they leave us to pursue our course alone, we must not conclude that they are lukewarm in the cause. If they accede to our request, and on visiting the school offer a suggestion, or propose an amendment, we must not regard it as an interference, but frankly and gratefully assure them that the matter shall be taken under consideration. It is ours to labor with the church, and for the church, not in opposition to it, nor independently of it. The school is the established agency which each separate congregation of the faithful employs as its accredited instrumentality for the religious tuition of the young. To the congregation which originated it, the school must be held responsible for an account of its doings.

PART V.

THE TEACHER'S FUTURE ACCOUNT.

LITTLE space is left for entering on our last particular. We must briefly hint a few thoughts to be worked out in detail by the reader in his silent meditations.

Apart from all speculations, there is one thing in the future which stands before us in solemn certainty,—the day of final account. We know that then we must stand before God's bar. We know that then we shall meet our Sabbath-charge. Yes, we shall meet them then ; but "WHERE?" we ask ; "at the right hand ? or the left ?" It behoves us first to inquire where we ourselves shall stand. Shall we come before the Judge, pleading our labors as a ground of acceptance ? This would not prove a valid plea. "Many will say in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name ? and I will profess unto them, I never knew you." When the person is unaccepted, the services go for nothing. Cain might offer the first-fruits, but they were a vain

gift, when his hopes rested not on the Saviour of sinners. Nay: our very labors will involve aggravations of our guilt. What shall we reply, if an inquiry be instituted as to our absences from duty, our lukewarmness in duty, our prayerlessness after duty? Shall we not be reckoned unprofitable servants? What have we done with the talents intrusted to our use? Too often we have done no more than a slavish obedience compelled. Shall it be given *us* to enter into the joy of our Lord? Never, never, for the sake of what our own hands have wrought. Christ's death must be our only defense, his righteousness our only shield.

They who "watch for souls," we are told, will have to "give an account;" not for others, but for themselves; not for others, we repeat, save, and herein lies the one solemn exception, wherein the sins of others are attributable to *their* misconduct. If we have failed to warn, or if our warning has failed of earnestness, the blood of souls will be required at our hands. (Ezek. iii. 18, 20.) Truly may it be said, What manner of persons ought we to be,—we, who, in a higher sense than the artist of old, are laboring "for eternity!" Yet for our encouragement let us remember, that while answerable for the discharge of our work, we are not answerable for its success or non-success, any further than

that depends on our diligence or our remissness. Wherein we have done our work with fidelity, the reception or rejection of our teachings must lie at our scholar's door. (Ezek. iii. 19, 21.)

A teacher, if right-hearted, will be anxious to say at the last, "Behold here am I, and here is the flock thou gavest me to feed." And there is no reason why he should despair of thus giving in his account "with joy and not with grief." Has he not the promise that they who are "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," shall find their labor "not in vain?" Yes, it shall "not be in vain *in the Lord*;" for "he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself." True, the promise may seem to tarry; but if it tarry, we must wait for it. (Hab. ii. 3.) Let us not judge according to the appearance. Learn a lesson from what might have been recorded in a fellow-teacher's diary, a few weeks past:—

March 1, 1860. The month has set in "like a lion." This morning the snow fell fast and small, freezing as it fell, while a chill wind violently drifted it along the hardened soil. I met two men, and overheard one say, "I put my radish-seed in last week, but I wish I had it back in my bag." Like him, I too have sown my seed; but shall I wish to recall it? No, it

is incorruptible seed, and shall be lodged by the heaven-breathed wind in that very nook where it will yield the most abundant return. How often has a special remark which I designed for one, sunk into the soul of another ! I aimed at a particular mark, and missed my aim ; but the bow, though in this respect as if drawn at a venture, sent forth its arrow to do an appointed work. I have no cause to distrust, or to despair.

* * * *

March 18, 1860. A genial sunlit day, with balmy and almost summer air. Every one bright and hopeful. All men sanguine as to the prospects of the sowing-time and the harvest. Ah ! how easy to believe, when sight seconds our faith ! Why is there not among men more confidence in that sure word of promise, that long as earth itself may last, seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, shall not fail ? Do I ask, Why ? Oh ! my soul, look within, and see if there is not the same thorny root of unbelief too often choking thine affiance in thy God, and forbidding thee to hope against hope, when the blessings of his grace visit not thy class ? Banish, henceforth, these mistrustful fears. Learn to recognize the God of providence and the God of salvation as the God of covenant-faithfulness, who never stays his hand, save when

our own sins and shortcomings call for "a sore famine in the land;" nor always stays his hand even then, but both in the blessings of nature and of grace, ever surpasses in the richness of his gifts all that we could ask or expect to receive.

While the teacher shares the strong hope which is held out to all who work for God, there are sources of encouragement peculiar to himself. He labors for those whose tender years furnish every facility that heart could desire. In childhood, there is an impressibility, too often deadened in mature life—an implicitness of faith, which unceasing contact with things seen and felt has oft destroyed in riper age—an ardor of love, which the course of years is apt to chill—a facility of obedience, which strongly contrasts with manhood's stubbornness of will—an aptitude for religious reverence, which the frown of the scorner or the jest of the scoffer, frequently weakens in those of older growth. In childhood, there is an absence of care, which leaves the heart free to wait upon the Lord without distraction. In childhood, the comparative absence of evil habit, renders less difficult an entrance through that strait gate, which allows the transit of no cherished sin. Childhood, too, is an especial object of heavenly

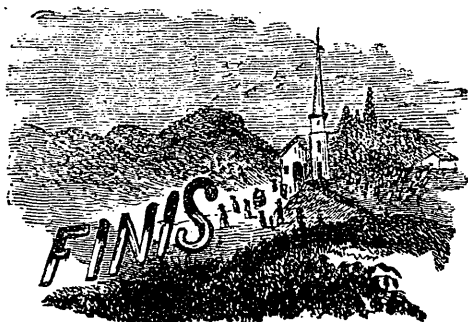
compassion and love. The hosannas of the young are not despised. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings does God perfect his praise ; and to them does he reveal what from the wise and the prudent he judiciously hides. On the sacred record also stands inscribed that gracious word, " Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

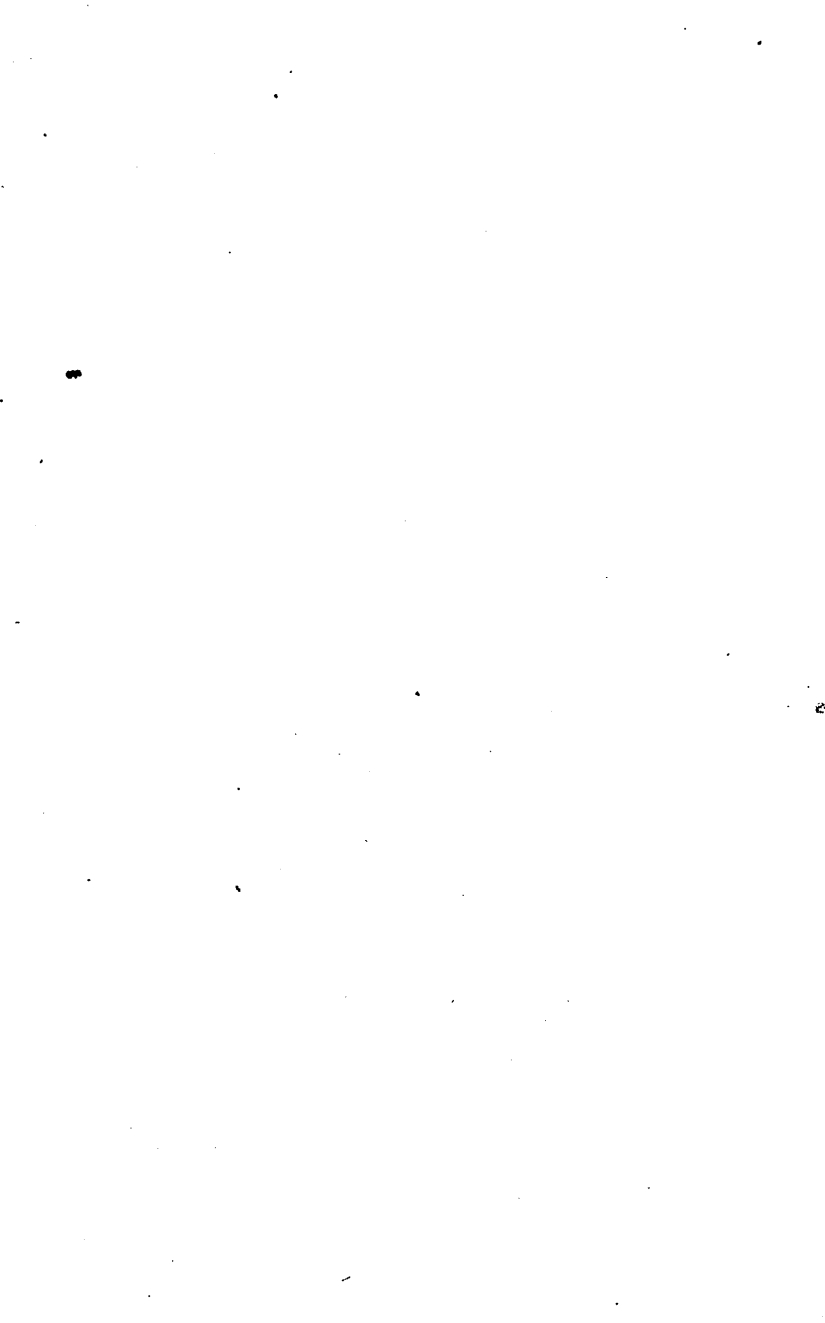
Fellow-teachers, lift up your heads with joy. Look forward with fervent hope. You are carrying out your Master's work, and doing your Master's will. Prosecute the work in his spirit and his fear, so shall you be crowned with his abundant blessing. Let not your hands hang down ; let not your spirits droop ; let not your zeal abate ; let not your energy fail. God is with you : he is at your right hand : why should you be moved to despondency or fear ? Trust in him. Labor in his strength. Joy unspeakable will be yours, if one of your class be brought safe to heaven ; and a joy yet fuller, if you should meet them all in glory. Labor for that higher joy. Be not disheartened, if as yet you see not one converted. Be not contented, as long as you fear that one remains unsaved. Press on diligently ; press on hopefully. Walk in close communion with God ; dwell in the light of his

presence; then to you it shall be said as to the church at large;—

“ARISE, SHINE;”

for “THE LORD SHALL ARISE UPON THEE, AND HIS GLORY SHALL BE SEEN UPON THEE; THE LORD SHALL BE UNTO THEE AN EVERLASTING LIGHT, AND THY GOD THY GLORY.”





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